THE WAY OF TRUE PEACE and VNITY In the true CHURCH OF CHRIST,

In all humility and bowels of love presented to them.

By WILLIAM DELL,
One of the least and unworthiest of the Servants of God, in the Gospel of his dear Son.

Psal. 120. 7.
I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for War.

Utrum nos schismatici sumus an vos, nec ego nec tu, sed Christus interrogetur ut indicet Ecclesiam suam, *August. contr. liter. Petil. l. 2. c. 85.*

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UM

To the Honourable the

Commons of England

Assembled in

PARLIAMENT.

IT *is* written, *that the* Kingdoms of the World shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ: *and now when* all *almost*, *that is* great *and* honourable, *and* noble *and* Royal, *and* wise *and* learned, *is found* against *this* Counsell *and* design *of God*; *how* highly *are you* honoured *of him*, *and how* happy *are you*, *that* You *yet are found* for *it*? You *after a manifold* Apostacy *and* defection *of many of your* Members, *seem* yet *to remain as* pillars *in the* House *of our* God; *yet you seem to be*, *among those* called *and* chosen, *and* faithful *ones*, *that now continue with the* Lamb, *who is* King *of* Kings, *and*

Lord *of* Lords, *in his* engagement *againſt*, *and* conqueſt *over the* TEN-HORN'D BEAST: *And to* turn *aſide*, *from* this *work*, *would be*, *to* give up *your ſelves to* double *ruine*, *to wit*, *both from* heaven *and* earth. *And therefore the* Lord *make you* faithful, *that you may* do *this work for* God, *and to* fulfill *his* Word; *and not for* your ſelves, *and to* fulfill *your own* Ends.

And now as you are buſie *about the* Peace *of the* Kingdom, *to ſettle and eſtabliſh* that *upon a* right *and* ſure *foundation*; *ſo* God *hath engaged* my *heart*, *to* meditate *the* peace *of the* Church. *And though I have* excluded *your* power *from having a* hand *in this* Work, *yet I have not*, *in any meaſure*, wronged *you*, *as you ſhall* perceive, *but rather endevoured to preſerve you*, *from* daſhing *your ſelves*, *againſt* that *Rock*, *againſt* which, *all the* ignorant *and* unwiſe Rulers *and* Kingdoms *of the* world, *both* have *and yet* ſhall, *daſh themſelves in* peeces. *It ſhall be your* wiſdom *to be* built *up*, *together with the* Church, *on* Chriſt; *but it would be your* confuſion, *to go about to* build *the* Church *on* your ſelves *and your* power; *ſeeing* this *building is too* weighty *for any* foundation, *but* Chriſt *himſelf*. *Your* power *will do* well *in the Kingdoms of the* world, *but not in* Gods *Kingdom*, *which is* Chriſts inheritance, *from the* beginning *to the* end. *You ſhall be* happy, *to be* ſubject *in it*, *but none muſt be* Lord *or* Law-giver *here*, *but* Chriſt *himſelf*. *Let not the* Devil *who in theſe* laſt *times*, *hath in* many *places tranſlated the* myſtery *of* iniquity, *from the* Eccleſiaſtical *Kingdom of the* Clergy, *into the* temporal *Kingdom of the* Magiſtrate, *any* longer *keep it there*; *ſeeing*, *it will be as* pernicious *in* this, *as in* that: *for it will be*, *no leſs* dangerous *an evil*, *for the* Magiſtrate *to make himſelf* Lord *and* Law-giver *in the* Church, *then for the* Pope, *or* General Councel, *in* all *the*

the Kingdoms called Chriſtian; *or for the* Archbiſhop, *or* National Aſſembly *in* particular *Kingdoms. Men have commonly* thought, *that to preſerve the* godly *in worldly* peace *and* proſperity, *is to preſerve the* Church; *whereas, to preſerve them in* faith, hope, love, *in* union *and* communion *with* Chriſt *and the* Father, *in and through the* Spirit, *this* only *is to* preſerve *the* Church; *and this* oft-times, *is* better *done by* Chriſt, *whoſe work* only *it is, in* affliction, *then in* proſperity. *Wherefore do* You *look to the* care *of the* State, *and truſt* Chriſt *with the care of his* Church, *ſeeing he is both* faithful *and* able *to ſave it* perfectly. *The* peace *of the* Church *lies in* Chriſt *only, and* no *part of it* out *of him, no not for a* moment; *and this* their *peace,* Chriſt *is able to preſerve in* Himſelf, *in the* midſt *of the moſt* cruel *and* deſperate *evils of the* world. *Now what the* true *Church of* Chriſt *is, and* wherein *its* Peace *and* Unity *lies, is here in* ſome meaſure *declared, for the* good *of the* faithful *everywhere, and* particularly *for* Your *good; leſt you being* glorious inſtruments *in the hand of* God, *for* one *work, ſhould* miſcarry *in* another. *And this I have done, through* God, *not becauſe* I *was* worthy *to do it, but becauſe,* it *was worthy to be* done. *For why ſhould the* Church, any longer *be* ignorant *of the things that belong unto its* peace? *and why ſhould the* Members *of it,* any longer *lie as* ſcattered bones, *dry and dead, and not* gathered *up into the* unity *of a* living *body? and* who *could* longer *indure, to ſee* unskilfull Phyſitians, *under pretence of* healing *the Church,* wound *it ſtill* deeper; *and under* pretence *of* procuring *its* peace, *hurry it into endleſs* diſſentions *and* diviſions? *In this caſe of* neceſſity, *I could not but ſpeak, both out of* duty *and* love, *and I hope none of* You *will* deſpiſe *to hear, who conſider, that* God, *when he layes aſide the* wiſe *and* prudent, *chooſes* Babes *and* Suck-

lings, *to perfect his praise, out of* their *mouths; that so he* himself, *may be the more* glorified *and* admired, *in his* weak *and* mean *instruments. Now let his* praise *be* above *the* earth *and the* heavens; *and let* him *give you the* honor that all his Saints have: *and this is his* hearty *desire, who* humbly *writes himself*

Your servant in the Gospel,

William Dell.

To

To his *Excellency* the Lord General

FAIRFAX,

And the *Honorable*

Lieutenant-General *CROMWEL*,

Together with the

Councel of VVar.

THE *preſence* of the *Lord* having *turned* your courſe *backward* like *Jordan*, from what it was a *year* ago; and all former *inchantments* and *divinations* uſed againſt you, being *diſſolved*, through the *renewing* of the *ſame* preſence of *God* with you, after a manifeſt *withdrawing* of it; and You through a *bleſſed neceſſity*, being *now* doing *that* work of *God*, which *once* you had *little* minde to, *viz.* The *procuring* the *Peace* of the Kingdom, by ſubduing the *great* enemies of Peace, and *removing* all the *enmity* againſt *peace*, that was *inwrapped* in our very *Laws*, and degenerated *Conſtitution* of the *Kingdom*: I thought good, whiles *You* are thus buſie about the *peace* of the *Kingdom*, which is a peace *without* you, to put you in minde of the *true* peace of the *true* Church, which is a peace *within* you, and an *eternal* peace, as the *former* is but a *temporal*: for what *advantage* will it be for *you*, to have peace among *men*, & to want peace with *God*? to do the *work* of God in the *world*, and to be *deſtitute* of the work of *God* in your own *hearts*? to *deſtroy* the enemies to *worldly* peace, and yet to *maintain* in your own *hearts* the *corruptions* of unrenewed *nature*, which are the enemies of *heavenly* peace? Take heed therefore, that your preſent *employments*, do not ſo *over-ingage* you in *this* world, that you *neglect* the world *to come*: take heed, leſt by *ſeeking* your ſelves, you have your reward *here*: but do the work of God, *for* God; and whilſt you *act* for God, *live* in him, and let *him* be your reward, and not the *creature*.

And now here in this *Diſcourſe*, ſhall you ſee a better *Peace* and *Agreement*, then you are *ſtriving* for, (though your *work* alſo be

excellent

excellent and *glorious*) even such a *Peace* and *Agreement*, of which Christ *himself*, is the *immediate* Author and Prince, and which he *communicates*, not to the *world*, but to them he chooses *out* of the world, even the *Peace* of *God* in *Jesus Christ*, by the *Spirit*, which hath its *foundation* in *Christ*; and its *influence* into each *Communion* of Saints, all the world over: And *this* Peace can no more be *brought* about by your *Sword*, then by the Magistrates *Scepter*; and therefore *take heed*, lest you now, having *power* in your hands, to *another* purpose, should so far *forget* your selves, as to *do* that *your selves*, which you have *condemned* in others. Therefore suffer the *Word* only, to be both *Scepter* and *Sword* in the *Kingdom* of *God*, and let the true *Church* remain *free*, in the *Freedom* which *Christ* hath confer'd upon it; or else, the *Lord*, whose *own* the Church is, will as *certainly*, in his *due* time, take the *sword* out of *your* hands, as he hath done the *Scepter* out of the *Magistrate's*, and throw *you*, into *one* destruction with him. But I am perswaded *better* things of you, though I thus speak, and even *such* things, as are suitable to the *light* of the *Gospel*, and to the *vertues* and *graces* of *Christ* and his *Spirit*, which have been hitherto (and I *hope*, will yet *still* be) very *manifest*, not only in *You Honorable Ones*, who have the chief *Conduct*, but also in very *many* of the *Councel* and *Army* besides. And upon such a *gathering together* of *Gods* people, and *Saints*, (let the *World* (if it please) still *laugh* at that word) who can but *think*, he hath some *choice* and *singular* work in hand for his own *glory*? The *Lord God Almighty* hath *already* done *great* and *wonderful* works by *you*, and is yet doing *greater*, if you will continue to *believe* and *obey*; and in *all* these things he only is to be *exalted*, and not *You*. For hath not that *Day* of the *Lord* of Hosts *dawned*? *yea the morning of it is already gone forth, Which is upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he is to be brought low, and the Lord alone is and must be exalted, in this day.*

Now the *Lord* cause you to *dwell* and *continue* in *that* Church, which is the *body* of *Christ*, and *habitation* of *God*, and give you *peace* with those that are *reconciled* to *God* by *Christ*, and to *one another* in *Christ*, by the *Spirit*; in which *union* and *communion*, I remain.

Your assured Servant,

W. D.

TO THE READER.

SUCH *are the noiſes of* waters, *and* thundrings, *and* earthquakes *among us*; *and ſo* great *and* continued *are our* ſhakings *and* confuſions, *through* hatred *and* love, hopes *and* fears, joyes *and* ſorrows, triumphs *and* indignations, *that there is no* ſilence in heaven, *for ſo much as* half an hour. *Wherefore, though I* dinot *here, touching ſo* ſweet *and* glorious *a thing, as* PEACE, *and* ..eclare *from the very* word (*or elſe I had ſaid nothing*) *wherein the* true peace *of the* true Church *conſiſts*; *and alſo, how the* faithful, *and* Churches, *may* preſerve *that peace, in their* Communion *with one another, which they have, in the* Son, *and in the* Father: *yet mens* heads *and* hearts *are now ſo* full, *that it is to be* doubted, *but* few *will* regard *it*. Notwithſtanding, *conſidering that there is among us, an* election of grace, *and a* flock *of* Chriſt, *who both* know, *and will* hear *his voyce at* any *time*; *I thought good to* ſpeak *this in their behalf, for whoſe* profit *all the* creatures *of* God *were made in the* world, *and all the* gifts *of* Chriſt *are given in the* Church. *And though I am very conſcious, of my* rudeneſs of ſpeech, *in this Diſcourſe, as alſo of my* weakneſs *and* infirmity *in many things, having not yet attained to a* perfect man, *and to the* meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; *and ſo dare not ſay, that every* jot *and* tittle *here, is of the* pure river *of* water *of* life, *without any* humane mixture; *yet they that are* ſpiritual, *and* able *to* judge, *will* own *all in it, that is of the* word *and* ſpirit *of* truth, *and will not reject* ſilver *tryed* four *or* five *times, becauſe it is not tryed* ſeven *times. And what is* weak *and* imperfect *in it, the* true Church *of Chriſt* (*for whoſe dear* ſake *and* love *I have ſpoken all this*) *ſeeing it*

2 Cor. 11.6.

is,

Ecclesia Regina misericordiæ, cujus viscera sunt mera miserationes & remissiones peccatorum.

Cito vos omnes, ut respondeatis mihi coram Altissimo & justissimo Judice, post paucos annos.

is, as Luther *speaks*, The Queen of Mercy, whose very bowels, are meer compassions and forgivenesses of sins, *will easily* pass *it by, and* forgive it. *And as for men,* haughty *and* high *in their* own *spirit*, contemning *and* disdaining *any thing that agrees not to their* palate; *I do as easily* despise *their* censure, *as they lightly pass it. It is* enough, *that I seek the* glory *of* Jesus Christ, *the* Son of the living God, *and the* welfare *of* that *Church, that is his* body; *and for the* rest, *let me become as* vile *as the* Apostles *were made to the* world, *who were counted the* filth *and* offsouring *of all things*; *or as Mr* Baily, Rutherford, Bastwick, Pryn, Love, *or any other of my old enemies in* Parliament *and* City, *not worth the naming, have sought to make me.* All *whom, unless God give them* repentance to life, *I* cite, *as once* Hierom *of* Prague *did his enemies, in the* like *cause*, To appear within a few years, before the most high and righteous Judge, Jesus Christ, *to* answer *all that they have done* wickedly, *if not* maliciously, *against his* Name, Truth, Gospel, Spirit, People; *and that under the* form *and* pretence *of* godliness. *And now* well *knowing, that the more any thing is of* Christ, *the more* enmity *and* opposition *it will meet with from the* world, *and from the* worldly *Church. I commit* Christs *own* word *and* cause *to his own* care and protection, *who* lives *and* reigns *for* this *very purpose, to* uphold *his own* despised *truth, against the* glorious, *but* deceitful *doctrines of* men; *and* to make all his enemies his foot-stool. *And so* waiting *in this* assured *hope, if thou love* Christ, *I remain,*

Thine in him,

VVilliam Dell.

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THE

THE Way of true Peace and Vnity, in the true Church of CHRIST.

HAving now for a long time time together observed with a said heart and troubled ſpirit, the *grievous differences* and *diſſentions*, among the *faithful* and *Churches of Chriſt*, and perceiving alſo, that there is yet *no healing* of this error, many or moſt of them not *clearly* underſtanding, wherein their *true peace* and *unity* ought to conſiſt; and ſo, are ſtill proſecuting *former*, with *later* miſtakes, till their *wound* is become *almoſt* incurable; I found my *heart* inclined and engaged by *God*, to *propound* to *others*, that way of *Peace*, which *my ſelf* have learned from the *Word*. And this I deſire to do, not that I might ſeem to be *ſomething*, or be *accounted* of, any more, then the *meaneſt* of all *Gods* people, being indeed *unworthy* to miniſter, ſo much as a *cup* of *cold water*, to the *Church*, the *Spouſe* of *Chriſt*, much leſs ſo *incomparable* a *treaſure* as the *word* of *God* is, in compariſon of which, *all* the *World* is not to be mentioned; but meerly out of *love* and *compaſſion* to the infirmities of my *brethren*, whom I ſee walking in the *light* of their own *fire*, and in the *ſparks*, which they themſelves do *kindle*, whereby they are in great danger to *lie down in ſorrow*; whilſt in the mean time they neglect the *true light*, which *alone* is to ſhine in the *Kingdom* of *God*, till all *ignorance* and *darkneſs* be done away. And as my *end* and *ſcope* is, to bring all men, from all humane *doctrines*, and *conceptions* of carnal wiſdom and prudence, to the *Word* of *God*;

ſo I deſire all men that are *ſpiritual*, and able to judge, to *allow* of no more in this *Diſcourſe*, then they ſhall finde *agreeable* to this word; and what ever the *Word* of *God* in the *true* ſenſe and meaning of it, ſhall *diſapprove* or *condemn*; ſo far, let *them* alſo *diſapprove* and *condemn* with it, as I *my ſelf* alſo do; knowing well, that *no Word* ought to have any place in the *Church* of *God*, but the *Word* of *God*, which *alone* carries light, life, righteouſneſs, wiſdom and power, *ſufficient* and *enough* in it ſelf, to do the *whole* minde and work of *God* in his *Church*. Wherefore what I have *freely learned*, I ſhall *freely communicate*, deſiring every one to regard his own *ſalvation*, ſeeing now after ſo *clear* a diſcovery of *truth*, he can have no *cloak*, nor the leaſt *excuſe* for his ſin.

The peace propounded, is,

Now that he that *reads* may *underſtand*, it is neceſſary for me, ſpeaking of the *unity* and *peace of the Church*, to tell you now at *firſt*, that I intend not to propound any way of peace, either between the *Church* and the *World*, or elſe between the *carnal* and *ſpiritual* children of the *Church*, as having learned no *ſuch* thing out of the *word* of *God*.

1. Not between the Church and the world.

Firſt, Not between the *Church* and the *world*: for the *Lord* never *intended* any *reconciliation* and *agreement* between *theſe*, in the *ſpiritual* and *eternal* things of the *Kingdom* of God; for *theſe*, are two *diſtinct ſeeds*, and ſorts of people; the *one* from *beneath*, the *other* from *above*; the *one* the *ſeed* of the *woman*; the *other* the *ſeed* of the *Serpent*; and between *theſe* two, God hath put *ſuch* an *enmity*, that no *man* can take away. Wherefore *they*, who never *minding* theſe two *different* ſeeds; between *whom* God hath put ſuch *irreconciliable* enmity, would make *all* the *people* of one or moe *Whole* Kingdoms a *Church* at once, and would reconcile all of them together, in the *things* of *God*, and in the *ways* of his *worſhip*, according to *devices* and *methods* of their *own*; theſe men *know* not what they *do*; for they walk in the *darkneſs* of their *own hearts*, and not in the *light* of the *Word*; which ſhows us clearly, that it is as poſſible to reconcile *Michael* and the *Devil*, as the *Angels* of both.

2. Not between the carnal and ſpiritual children of the Church.

2. Neither *ſecondly*, do I finde *any* way in the World, to reconcile *all* thoſe together, who are commonly called The *viſible Church*, ſeeing even among *theſe*, there are two *diſtinct* ſorts of *children*, as *Paul* teacheth us; *one* ſort of thoſe, that are *born after the fleſh*, as *Iſhmael* and *Eſau*; and another of *thoſe*, who are

born

born after the ſpirit, as *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*: and there is as great enmity between *theſe* in the Church, as between the former in the world; for *they that are born after the fleſh*, are always *perſecuting them that are born after the ſpirit*, but never *agreeing* with them.

Spiritual Chriſtians make up the body of Chriſt.

Now of theſe *two ſorts* of Chriſtians, *one* makes up the *body* of Chriſt; the *other*, the *body* of Antichriſt. The ſpiritual children, make up Chriſts true body, as it is written, *He gave him, to be the Head over all things, to the Church which is his body*; for theſe being born of the Spirit, do alſo partake of the Spirit, and ſo are the true *fleſh* of Chriſt, as *all* that *fleſh* is, in which the Spirit dwels; and theſe *all worſhip God in the ſpirit, and have no confidence in the fleſh*, that is, in no fleſhly Forms, Ceremonies, or Worſhip.

Carnal Chriſtians the body of Anti-chriſt.

The *carnal* children of the Church make up *Antichriſts* true *body*: For as Chriſts *body* conſiſts of *ſpiritual* Chriſtians, ſo *Antichriſts* of *carnal*; For *Antichriſt* ſets up in the *temple of God*, as well as *Chriſt*; and as *Chriſt* get his body together of *ſpiritual* Chriſtians; ſo *Antichriſt* gets his body together of *carnal* Chriſtians: and *theſe* have a *form* of *Religion*, or *godlineſs*, but they have no *ſpirit* or *power* in that form: yea, under the *form* of *godlineſs* they exerciſe the greater *power* of *ungodlineſs*: And *Chriſt* and his *Spirit*, and all *their things*, are nowhere more oppoſed, then by *thoſe* in the *Church*, who have the *letter* of the word, but want the *ſpirit* of it, being taught of *men* only, and not of *God*. So that, *all* that part of Chriſtianity, that is *deſtitute* of the Spirit, and hath the *name* only, and not the *anointing* of Chriſtians, this makes up the *body* of Antichriſt. And now there can be no more *agreement*, between theſe *two bodies*, of *Chriſt* and of *Antichriſt*, that is, between *ſpiritual* and *carnal* Chriſtians, then between *Chriſt* and *Antichriſt* themſelves, the *heads* of theſe *bodies*. And as I finde *nothing* in the word, ſo neither do I *propound* any thing for an *agreement here*: for to go about to reconcile *there*, where the *Father* never *intended*, nor the *Son* never *undertook* any reconciliation, would not be a work of *Wiſedom*, but of *weakneſs*.

Peace between the children of peace.

So then the *way of peace* I ſhall ſpeak of, is between the *children of peace*, touching whom God hath promiſed, That *he will give them one heart, and one way*; and for whom Chriſt hath *prayed That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that*

that they also may be one in us: And *these* are the *elect* made *faithful*, *called* to be *Saints*, and *sanctified* through their *calling*; and *these* are the *true* Church of *God*.

The *peace* then I *seek* by this Discourse, is the *peace* of the *true* Church: Wherefore I shall first declare the Church *it* self, whose *peace* I seek; and then after declare, *wherein* this Churches *true* peace and unity *lies*; and also how it may be *preserved* among *themselves*, it being first *wrought* by Jesus Christ.

For the *Church* it self; what I have learned touching it, I shall speak *plainly*, and something *largely*, because the *right* understanding hereof is so *absolutely necessary* to our present *business*, and yet there are very *many*, and very great *mistakes* and *mis-apprehensions* touching *it*, even among the *faithfull*.

What the right Church is not.

The *right Church* then is not the *whole multitude* of the *people*, whether *good* or *bad*; that joyn together in an *outward* form or way of worship; for in this *Church* there are *Whoremongers*, *Idolaters*, *Thieves*, *Murderers*, and *all* sorts of *wicked* and *unbelieving* persons, which are so *far* from being the Church of *Christ*, that they are the very *Synagogue* of *Satan*, and *children* of the *Devil*, and therefore I shall not speak of *this* Church. But the *Church* I shall speak of, is the *true* Church of the *New Testament*, which I say is not any *outward* or *visible society*, gathered together into the *consent* or *use* of *outward* things, forms, ceremonies, worship, as the *Churches of men* are; neither is it known by *seeing* or *feeling*, or the *help* of *any* outward *sense*, as the *Society* of *Mercers*, or *Drapers*, or the like; but it is a *Spiritual* and *Invisible* Fellowship, gathered together in the *unity* of *faith*, *hope* and *love*, and so into the *unity* of the *Son*, and of the *Father* by the *Spirit*; wherefore it is wholly *hid* from *carnal* eyes, neither hath the *world* any *knowledge* or *judgement* of it.

What it is.

This true *Church* is the *Communion of Saints*, which is the communion *believers* have with *one another*: not in the things of the *world*, or in the things of *men*, but in the things of *God*; for as believers have their *union* in the *Son*, and in the *Father*, so in them also they have their *communion*; and the *communion* they have with one another in *God*, cannot be in their *own* things, but in *Gods* things, even in his *light*, *life*, *righteousness*, *wisdom*, *truth*, *love*, *power*, *peace*, *joy*, &c. This is the true *Communion of Saints*, and this *Communion of Saints* is the true *Church of God*.

How the Church of God differs from the Churches of men.

Now

Now this *true* Church of *God*, differs from the *Churches* of *men*, in very many particulars, as follows.

1. *Members* come unto the Churches of *men*, either of their own *minds*, or else by the perswasion, or by the *forcing* of others; and so, but after the will *of man*; but none come to this *true Church* but from the *drawing of God the Father*, and his own *calling*, according to his *own purpose*.

2. In the *Churches* of *men*; *members* are admitted through an outward *confession of doctrine*; but *none* are admitted into this *true Church*, but through a *new birth* from *God* and his *Spirit*, Joh. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God* (which is the *right Church* of the *New Testament*) *For that which is born of the flesh is flesh*, and so remains *without* in the *world*; but *that which is born of the spirit is spirit*, and so hath *entrance* into the *true* Church.

3. In the *Churches* of *men* there are more *wicked* then *righteous*; but in this *true* Church of *Christ the people are all righteous*, not *one* excepted, as it is written, *Thy people shall be all righteous*, Isa. 60. For they *all* have their *iniquities forgiven them*, and they are *all redeemed* and *washed* with the *blood of the Lamb*.

4. In the *Churches* of *men*, the people for the most part, are onely *taught* of *men*, who are their *heads* and *leaders*, and whose *judgements* they *depend* on, and *follow* in *all* things; but in the *right Church*, the people are *all taught of God*, as *Isaiah* saith, *Thy children shall be all taught of the Lord*: and *Christ* saith, *They shall hear and learn from the Father*: and *John* saith, *The anointing they have received, teacheth them all things*.

5. In the *Churches* of *men*, the greatest part are *hated* and *rejected of God*, as being *strangers* and *enemies* to *Christ*; but in the *true Church* all the members are *dear* to *God*, as *Christ* is *dear*; and *loved* of *God*, as *Christ* is *loved*, as being one *flesh* and *spirit* with him.

6. The *Churches* of *men* are of *mens building*, *contriving*, *framing*, *fashioning*, *beautifying*: but the true Church is built onely by Christ, as it is written, *Zach.* 6. 12. *The man whose name is the* BRANCH, *he shall build the Temple of the Lord, even he shall build it*: And again, *Math.* 16. 18. *Upon this rock I will build my Church*: The true Church is such a *building*, which neither *Men* nor *Angels* can frame, but *Christ* alone.

7. The *Churches* of *men* are all of them more or less the *habitation of Antichrist*, who (as *Paul* saith, 2 *Thes.* 2.4.) *as God sitteth in the Temple of God*, that is, not in the *true Temple of God*, but in the *Churches* of *men*, which *arrogate* to themselves that *name* and *title*; *shewing himself that he is God*: For *Antichrist* always dwels *there*, where men have a *form* of *godliness*, denying the *power*: but the *true* Church is *built together*, to be the *habitation of God, in the Spirit*, *Ephes.* 2. 22. And again, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Ye are the Temples of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*

8. The *Churches* of *men* are as *large* as *men* will make them; for they that have *chief power* in these Churches, interesting themselves in *worldly Magistrates*, through their *favour* and *help*, make their Churches as large as the Magistrates *Dominions*: thus the Church of *Rome* was made of as *large extent* as the *Dominions* of the *Emperour*, and of other *Princes*, in whom the *Pope* had interest. And so likewise, the Church in other *Kingdoms*, was made as *large* as the *Dominions* of the *temporal* Magistrate; and *all* under their *power*, must be *forced* to be, of their *Church*: But the *true Church*, which is the *Kingdom of the Son*, is onely the *preparation* of the *Fathers* Kingdom, and so will admit *no more* into *it*, then the *Fathers* Kingdom will admit into *it*; the *Sons* Kingdom, and the *Fathers* being of a like *latitude* and *extent*, and so the *Sons* Kingdom is no larger then the *Fathers*, nor the *Fathers* then the *Sons*: The *Fathers* Kingdom will not *receive* any into it, that have not *first* been of the *Sons* Kingdom; and the *Sons* Kingdom will not *admit* into it, what the *Fathers* Kingdom will not *after* receive; but the *Son* delivers up, his *whole* Kingdom to the *Father*, and the *Father* receives it *all*, without any *exception*.

Now from hence these *three* things are evident.

1. That the *Kingdoms* of *England, Scotland, &c.* are not the *Church*, but the *world*, as well as the Kingdoms of *France, Spain, Hungary, &c.* but in all *these*, and all *other* Kingdoms, the *faithful* who are taken into *union* and *communion* with *Christ*, and with *one another* in *him*, they are the *Church*, and not the Kingdoms *themselves*.

2. In *particular Assemblies*, whether *Parochial* or *Congregational*, all the *company* that meet together *bodily*, and have *outward*

outward communion in *outward* Ordinances, are not the *Church*; but *those* among *all* these, that meet together in *one Faith* and *Spirit*, in one *Christ* and *God*; for *herein* only stands the *true communion* of *Saints*, and the *true Church* of the *New Testament* is to be *judged hereby*, and *by no outward* things *whatsoever*.

3. That it belongs not to *Magistrates* and *worldly Powers*, to say, which is the *Church*, and, *which* is *not* the *Church*; *who* do *belong* to it, and *who* do *not*; but it belongs to *Christ* onely to point out his *own* Church, seeing *he* onely *knows* it, and it onely stands by *his election* and *collection*, and not by *mans*.

9. The Churches of *men* knit themselves together into *such* Societies, by some *outward Covenant* or *Agreement* among themselves: But the *true* Church is knit into *their* Society among *themselves*, by being *first* knit *unto* Christ, their *Head*; and as soon as ever they are *one* with *him*, they are also *one* with *one another* in him; and are not *first* one *among themselves*, and then *after* one *with* Christ: So that the *true* Church is a *spiritual* Society, knit unto *Christ* by *Faith*, and knit to *one another* in *Christ*, by the *Spirit* and *love*; and this makes them *infinitely* more *one*, then any *outward* Covenant they can engage themselves in: *the union* wherein *God* makes us *one*, passing *all* the unions, wherein *we* can make *our selves* one. And so when *some* believers *perceive the grace* that is given to *others*, they *presently* fall into *one communion*, without any more ado. Wherefore they that are of the *Church*, the *body*, cannot deny *communion* to them that are in *true union* with *Christ*, the *head*, when they do perceive this grace. For this is *considerable* in this matter, that we are not *first* one with the *Church*, and then after one with *Christ*: but we are *first* one with *Christ*, and *then* one with the *Church*, and our *union* with the *Church flows* from our union with *Christ*, and not our *union* with *Christ*, from our union with the *Church*: *Christ*, *Joh.* 17. prays, *That they all*, that is, believers, *may be one in us*: So that our *union* is not first among our *selves*, and then with the *Son*, and with the *Father*: but it is *first* with the *Son*, and with the *Father*, and *then* with one another in *them*: And *Christ* is the *door* through which we enter into the *Church*, and not the *Church*

the door, through which we enter into *Christ*: For men may *joyn* themselves to *Believers* in the use of all *outward* Ordinances, and yet never be joyned to *Christ*, nor to *that communion* which Believers have in *Christ*; but a man cannot be *joyned* to *Christ*, but he is *joyned* to *all Believers* in the world, in the *communion* they have with *Christ*, and with one another in *him*; *which* upon all occasions he *enjoys* with them, wherever he *meets* with them. So that the *true Church* is *knit* up together into *one body* and *society*, by *one Faith* and *Spirit*; the *Churches* of *men* by an *outward Covenant* or *Agreement* onely.

10. The *Churches* of *men* have *humane Officers*, who act in the strength of *natural* or *acquisite* parts, who do *all* by the *help* of *Study*, *learning*, and the like: But in the *true* Church, *Christ* and the *Spirit* are the only *Officers*, and *men* onely, so far, as Christ and the Spirit dwel and *manifest themselves* in *them*: and so when they do any thing in the *Church*, it is not *they* that *do* it, but Christ and his Spirit in *them*, and by *them*: And therefore saith *Paul*, *Seek ye a proof of Christ speaking in me? which to you wards is not weak, but mighty*: who ever is the *instrument*, Christ is the only *Preacher* of the *New Testament*; and that which is the *true Gospel*, is the *ministration* of the *Spirit*; for *holy men spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit*; and were first anointed with the *Spirit*, before they preached: *Judas* who preached the *word*, and was not *anointed* with the *Spirit*, proved a *traitor* to Christ; and who ever preach the *word* without the *Spirit*, are the successors of *Judas*, and also traitors to Christ.

11. The *Churches* of *men* have the *government* of them laid on *mens shoulders*, whether *single* persons, as *Pope* or Archbishop; or *combined*, as the *General Counsel*, or a *National Assembly*; but the *true Church*, hath its *government* laid only on Christs *shoulders*, as the Prophet fore-told, Isa. 9. *Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and the government shall lie on his shoulders*: and *Zech.* 6.12. *He shall build the temple of the Lord*, &c. *and he shall sit and rule upon his throne*: for none can *rule* the true Church, but he that *built* it. For if the *Church* be gathered together in *Christ*, as the *true* Church is, *Christ* is *alwaies* in the *midst* of them; and if *Christ* is ever *present* with them, his *own self*, how cometh it to pass that *Christ* may not *reign* immediately over them? Wherefore the *true* Church, reckons it *sufficient*

authority

authority, that they have *Christ* and his *Word*, for the *ground* of their practice; and what ever they finde in the *Word*, they presently set upon the practice of it, and never ask *leave* either of *civil* or *ecclesiastical powers*; but the *Churches* of *men* will do nothing without the *authority* of the *Magistrate* or *Assembly*, though it be never so *clear* in the *word* of God: For in their *Religion* they regard the *authority* of *men*, more then the *authority* of God.

12. The *Churches* of *men*, are still setting themselves one *above* another; but the *assemblies* of the *true* Church are all *equal*, having *Christ* and the *Spirit*, *equally* present with them and in them: and therefore the *believers of one* congregation cannot say, they have *power* over the believers of another congregation, seeing *all* congregations have *Christ* and his *Spirit* alike among them, and Christ hath not anywhere *promised*, that he will be *more* with *one*, then with *another*. And so Christ and the *Spirit* in one congregation, do not *subjected*, neither are *subject* to Christ and the *Spirit* in another congregation: as if *Christ* and the *Spirit* in several places, should be *above* and *under* themselves. But Christ in *each* assembly of the faithful is their *head*, and *this* head they dare not *leave*, and set up a *fleshly head* to themselves, whether it consist of *one* or *many* men: seeing *Antichrist* doth as strongly invade Christs headship in *many*, as in *one* man; in a *Councel*, as in a *Pope*.

Lastly, The *churches* of *men*, the *gates of hell* (which are *sin* and *death*) shall certainly *prevail against*; but the *true church* of Christ, though *the gates of hell* do always *fight* against it, yet they shall never *prevail* against it; as Christ hath promised, *Mat.* 16. 18. *Upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

In *these* things among *other*, the *true* Church of *Christ* differs from the *churches* of *men*: By which we may *clearly* see, that the *true* Church is not an *outward* and *visible society* or *corporation*, neither can it be pointed out by the finger, *loe here*, or *loe there*, seeing it is not confined to any certain *place*, *time*, or *person*, but it is wholly a *spiritual* and *invisible* society (as I have said) that is assembled in the *Son* and in the *Father*, who are the true *pale* and *circumference* of *this* Church, and out of *whom*, no *part* of it is to be found.

Now hereupon it will presently be said, if the *true Church* be *invisible*, as you have affirmed, then,

1. How shall we *know* it?
2. How can we *joyn* our selves to it?

To both which, I hope, I shall return a *clear* answer: And first to this Question,

How shall we *know* the true *Church* seeing it is invisible?

How the true Church may be known, though spiritual and invisible.

I answer; Just so as *Christ* the *head* is known, is the *church* his *body* known, and no other way; now *Christ* is known,

1. By the *revelation of the Father*; when *Peter* confessed *Christ* to be the *Son of the living God*, Christ told him, *that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father*: now the members of Christ can no more be *known*, without this *revelation* of the Father, then Christ the *head* of these members, seeing the *Apostle* hath said, *that as he is, so are we in this world*; so that he had need of other *eyes* then the world *sees* withal, that would discern the *true* Church, and of another *Revelation* then *any* that *flesh* and *blood* can make.

2. *Christ* was known by the *Spirits* resting on him, *Joh.* 1. 33. *And I knew him not* (said *John* Baptist) *but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit; and I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* After the *same* manner the *Church* of Christ is known, to wit, by the *Spirits* comming and remaining on it: So that *whatever* people have *received* the *Spirit* of Christ, of what *sort* or *condition* soever they be, *they* are the *Church* of Christ; and they that are *destitute* of this *Spirit*, are not of the Church.

3. *Christ* was known by the *works* he did, *Joh.* 10. 37. *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* And *thus* also is the true Church known, by *doing the works of Christ*; seeing Christ hath said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do, &c.* And thus the *body* of Christ, is known by its living the *life* of the *head*, which is the life of *faith* and *love*; and the *members* of Christ are known, by their *doing* the *works* of the head.

Thus then you see, that though the *true* Church be *spiritual*, and

and cannot be known by our outward *senses*, yet we have certain *tokens* of her *spiritual presence*; whereby we may reckon, that in this or that *place*, there be *certain* of her *members*. As by a natural example; though the *soul* of man in it self be *spiritual* and *invisible*, and cannot be discerned by any of our *senses*, yet may we have sure *tokens* of its presence, by the *effects* and *operations* of the soul, in that body where in it dwels; as the exercise of *reason*, *understanding*, *discourse*, &c. so *likewise* the *true Church* which is *invisible* in it self, may yet be known by *certain signs*, as by the *word of faith*, which sounds nowhere but in the *Church*, through the inspiration of the *Holy Spirit*; as also by the *life of Christ*; and *presence* and *operations* of his *Spirit*, &c. And thus you see how the Church, though it be *spiritual*, may be *known*.

Quest. 2. Well, but how can we be joyned to such a *spiritual* and *invisible* Church?

Answ. How we may be joyned to the true Church, though invisible. I answer, Is not *Christ* a *spiritual* and *invisible* head? And how canst thou be *joyned* to such a *head*? Sure our *joyning* to Christ, the *head*; and to the *Church*, his *body*, is of *one nature*; and *that* which joyns us to *Christ*, the *head*, will assuredly joyn us to the *Church* his *body*. Now through *faith* and the *spirit* onely, are we joyned to this *head*; and through *faith* and the *Spirit* onely, are we joyned to this *body*; and we cannot be of this *spiritual body* and *society*, but by being taken up into one *faith* and *spirit* with them: And so it is no more a *difficult* thing to be joyned to the *true Church*, because it is *spiritual* and *invisible*, then to be joyned to *Christ* himself upon the *same account*; that is, it is no more difficult to be joyned to a *spiritual* and *invisible body*, then to a *spiritual* and *invisible head*; and all acknowledge *Christ* to be such a *head*, and all *must* acknowledge the *Church* to be such a *body*.

If any shall say that they cannot presently *agree* to these things, because they have had far *different* apprehensions of the *Church* heretofore: I desire all such to consider, that if the *true Church* were onely an *outward* and *visible society* and *corporation* of men, that were to be *governed* by outward and visible *officers*, according to outward and visible *forms* and *orders*, there would then be no great *mystery* in the Church; for these things lie within the *easie* reach of every mans *reason*: But now, *Whole Christ* is a *great mystery*, *hid from ages and generations*; that is, not onely *Christ*, the *Head* of the Church, but also the *Church*, the *body* of Christ,

The Church the body, as well as Christ the head, a great mystery.

Christ, *Ephes.* 5.32. *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*: And this *latter mystery* (though both indeed make up one and the same mystery) of the *Church*, or *Christ* the *body*, can no more be known by *humane sense* or *reason*, then the *former* of *Christ* the *head*; the *revelation* of the *Father*, and the *anointing* of the *Spirit*, being *equally* necessary, for the *right* knowledge of *both*. And, as *Antichrist* hath had his *mystery of iniquity*, in oppositon to Christ the *Head*, in setting up a visible and carnal *Head*, instead of the *invisible* and *spiritual*: so also, he hath had his *mystery of iniquity*, in opposition to the *Church* the *body*; in *erecting* a *visible* and *carnal* body or Church, instead of an *invisible* and *spiritual*: for without all peradventure, the *head* and the *body* must be sutable each to other; and of the same *kinde* and *nature*: And so, as a *visible* and *carnal head*, the *Pope*, was in no measure sutable to an *invisible* and *spiritual* body, the *true* Church; so likewise a *visible* and *carnal* body, or Church, made and constituted by a mixture of *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* laws and power, is in no measure *sutable* to a *spiritual* and *invisible* head: But what a kinde of Head the *true Christ* is, such a kinde of *body* or *society* the *true Church is*, and both are *spiritual* and *invisible*. And as the *Lord* in the former age, hath been pleased to reveal to the Church, the mystery of the *Head*, after a long time of its obscuring and darkning, under the reign of *Antichrist*: so now we *wait in hope*, that he will in this present age, reveal the mystery of the *body*, which hath been no less obscured then the former; that so, the *whole mystery*, of *whole Christ*, may both be *known* and *accomplished* among us, according to the riches of his *glory*, by the *Gospel*. Wherefore all the *faithful* are desired, as occasion serves, to *make known*, what *God* hath *taught* them in this matter, to *supply*, what is here spoken, *weakly* and *imperfectly*.

The Church just such a body as Christ is a Head.

And thus having declared what the *true* Church of *Christ* is, and rectified some *ancient* and *general* mistakes touching it, I shall now proceed to make known from the *clear* and *evident* word, the *true* and *onely* bonds of the Churches *union*, *peace* and *agreement*, as the *Apostle* hath delivered them to us, by the Spirit, *Ephes.* 4.4,5,6.

Wherein the Unity of the true Church lies.

There is one body *and one* spirit, *even as yee are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

Where

Where note in general, that among *all* these *bonds* of the Churches *unity*, the *Apostle* makes not so much as any *mention* of UNIFORMITY; Indeed the *Rhemists* (being through the just judgement of God blinded) from this very place, urge and press *Uniformity* (which is the very word they use) as being the great and mighty *engine*, *first* to advance the *mystery of iniquity* to its Throne, and after to preserve it *there*. But it will appear *anon* by the *Apostles* Doctrine, that no *Conformity* or *Uniformity*, are any *bonds* of the true Churches *peace* and *union*; seeing the *Church*, is such a Kingdom, as is not preserved in its *peace*, by any outward *forms* and *orders*, as the *Kingdoms* of the world are, but by inward *principles*: Wherefore I shall proceed to speak of those *spiritual bonds* of the *spiritual* Churches *unity*, which the Apostle names; and they are in number, *seven*; the first whereof, is,

ONE BODY.

The *right* Church is one body.

There is *one body*, saith *Paul*; The *right* Church of Christ is but *one body* consisting of *many* members; and this is not a *natural* or *Political*, but a *spiritual body*, even the *body* of Christ. *Paul* in several of his Epistles, takes pleasure to set forth the *unity* of the Church by *this* similitude; as in *Rom.* 12. 4, 5. *As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.* And again, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. *As the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are but one body, so also is Christ*: Where he cals the *body*, by the name of the *head*, *both* making up *one* Christ.

This one body comprehends Believers of all Ages.

Now this Unity of Body, comprehends *believers* of all *ages*, and of all *sorts*.

1. Of *all ages*; for all believers that *hath been in* the world heretofore, or now *are*, or *shall be* hereafter, do *all* make up but *one body* of *Christ*, though born and brought forth of God in several *times* and *ages* of the world; as in a natural example, a *childe* is not born all in a *moment*, but is brought forth by *degrees*; and though *one* part be *born*, and another not *yet* born, this doth not hinder *unity of body* in the child; so the bringing forth the *Church* into the world in *several ages*, doth in no wise hinder this *unity of body*.

Of all sorts.

2. As this unity of body, comprehends believers of *all* ages, so also of all sorts and conditions, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *bond* and *free*, *&c.* all which are made *one body* in Christ. *Paul* in *Ephes.* 2. 15. speaking of Jews nnd Gentiles, saith, That *Christ* of *these twain* (who differed as much as *mankinde* could) *he hath made in himself, one new man*: For Christ *melting* these two, by his *Spirit*, which is as *fire*, causes *each* to depart from *himself*, and makes *both* together, one *new man*, or *body* of *Christ* in *himself*; and thus makes peace: For as long as men remain *different* bodies, or men, there is no *peace amongst* them; but when *Christ* makes them *one body* in himself, he makes *peace* between them; *unity of body* being a most necessary *bond of peace* in the *Church*; as the Apostle testifies, *Col.* 3.15. *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called, in one body.*

Now from this *unity of body* in the true *Church* we may note very considerable things, *all* to our prelent purpose.

Many things to be considered from the Churches unity of body.

1. That *unity of body* in the Church, flows from *unity of head*: for *here* the *members* do not *first* conspire into an *unity* of *body* among themselves, and *after* choose a *head* to their *body*; but *first*, these members are united to the *Head*, and then to *one another* in, and with the *Head*; and so because there is but *one* true *head*, Christ: there is but *one* true *body*, the *Church*.

2. As the members of the *natural body*, are *born* such, through a *natural* birth, before they do or can *exercise* any *acts* or *offices* suitable to such members, and do not *first* exercise such offices, and then *after* are made such members; as for instance, the *eye* doth not first *see*, and then or therefore, is made an *eye* in the body; or the *ear* first *hear*, and *then* or *therefore* is made an *ear* in the *body*: but the *eye*, is first born an *eye* in the body, and then *sees*; and the *ear* is *born* an ear, and then hears, *&c.* So in the *spiritual body* of Christ; each Christian hath his *membership*, meerly from a *new* or *spiritual birth*, and hath his *office* from his *membership*, and not from any *action* or *operation* of his own, before he was a member. In this *spiritual*, as in the *natural body*, the *eye* is *born* an eye, and therefore it sees, and the *foot* is born a foot, and therefore it walks, and each believer, is only that, which he is through a *new birth*, and cannot be *placed*, in such and such an office by *men*; no more then *men* can place, a *seeing eye* or *walking foot* in the natural *body*, but they must be *born* there, ere they can be *there*. Each member in

in the true Church, is *born* in his place and office by God, and is not placed there by *man*, and when the *Church* perceives this *grace* in its members, it *suffers* them to exercise those places and offices in the *body*, in which *God* hath produced or brought them forth, by his *Spirit*.

3. This *unity of body*, stands well with a *difference* or *distinction* of *members*, and the *difference* of *members*, doth not *hinder*, but *help* the *unity of body*: for saith *Paul*, *The body is not one member, but many, and if they were all one member, where were the body?* And therefore in the *body*, there are *diversity* of members, and each member hath its several *form* and *office*; *If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing, and if the whole were an ear, where were seeing, smelling, walking, &c.* So in the *unity* of Christs *body*, there are *diversity* of members, with diversity of *gifts* and *offices*; and so one hath the word of *wisdom*, another the word of *knowledge*, another the word of *faith*, another the *gift of healing*, &c. Every member in *this* body being in *office*, and having received the Spirit to *profit* withal. And so again, *Rom.* 12. 6. *Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us* (he speaks of all the members of the body, which have some or other gifts, given to them) *if it be prophesie, let us prophesie according to the proportion of faith; if ministry, let us wait on our ministring; or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, &c.* So that in the true Church, *unity* stands with *diversity*, but in the *false*, *unity* will not stand without *uniformity*. 1 Cor. 12.

4. In this *true* Church, or one *body* of Christ, notwithstanding *diversity* of members and offices, there is still an *equality* among them all; seeing all *alike* make up *one body*; in which regard *one* member is as necessary to the *body* as *another*, and *no* member can say to another, that I contribute more to the making up of the body then *thou*; the most *honourable* member, cannot say thus to the most *mean*, not the *Apostles* themselves to *Believers* among the *Gentiles*; for *we* are the *body* of Christ, as well as *they*, and *they* are the body of Christ no more then *we*: wherefore no member, for *diversity* of *office*, is to lift up himself above *another* member, who is as *necessary* as it self, to the making up the *body*, and also is every whit as *useful* in its place.

5. As in the *natural body*, each member is *contented* with its own place and office in the body: so is *every* member through the

grace given unto it, *contented* with its place and office in the spiritual *body*, and not one either envies or despises another.

6. The members of the *natural body*, do not each *live* to *themselves*, but *all* of them *serve* one another, and *each* of them serves *all*; as the *eye* sees for the *foot*, and the whole body, and the *hand* works for the *eye*, and the whole body, *&c.* So among believers, none *lives* and *acts* for *himself* only, but each believer *serves* all, and *all* serve each one in *love*.

7. Members that are united into one *body*, have a true *sympathy* with one another, both in *good* and *evil* things, 1 *Cor.* 12. 26 *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member* be honoured, *all the members rejoyce with it.*

8. Among the *members* of the *body*, there is no *law* of *force*, but only a *law of love*; no member compelling another, but each member serving another by *love*: and if one member be *infirm*, the rest *help* it, and do not *reject* it: the more they *care* for it, and do not the more *despise* it.

And this now is the *first* bond of the *true* Churches unity,

Unity of body.

Who break this bond of the Churches Unity.

Now they break this *first* bond of *unity*, that either live *out* of this *one body* of Christ, or else live in it, but not as *members*.

1. They that do content themselves, in *joyning* to some *outward* and *visible* society and corporation of men, though called a *Church*, and think that by being *knit* to them in wayes of *outward worship*, and *ordinances*, they live in the *unity* of the Church, when as yet all this while they live out of that *one body*, that is born of the *Spirit*, which is the onely *true* Church, and body of *Christ*: he that lives out of this *spiritual body*, though he live in the most *excellent society* in the world, yet he breaks the *unity* of the Church, not living in *one body* with it. And thus *many* break the Churches *unity*, that never *think* on it.

2. Again, *they* break this *bond* of the Churches *unity* that live in this *one body*, but not as members; And such are *they*, who having got the *advantage* of the *Magistrates* power, will needs lift *themselves* up above their *fellow members*, and exercise *authoritative, coercive, domineering* power over them, whereas the very *Apostles* themselves, were not *Lords* of the Church, but *fellow-members*

bers with the *faithful*; living in *one body*, and under *one head* with them, and so did all by *love* and *perswasion*, and nothing by *force* and *violence*. Now those *members* that *exalt* themselves above their *fellow* and *equal* members, what do they else but usurp the place of the *Head*? and so break in sunder the *unity* of the body, which stands in the *unity* of the *Head*? He that in a *single* or *combined* unity *sets* himself up above other *Believers*, by *giving Laws*, and by *prescribing* and *commanding Forms* and *Rules* to those that are every way his *equals*, he advances *himself* as another *head* besides *Christ*; and so *Anti christ* is nearer to us then we are *aware*; and many men that are so *forward* and *fierce*, to make and enforce *Rules* and *Orders*, colourably to procure the Churches *peace*, *they* are the *first men* that do *themselves* break this *first bond* of the Churches *Unity*, to wit, *Unity of Body*, which makes *all* Believers *equal* members, *equally* subject to one *Head*.

The *second* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*, is,

ONE SPIRIT.

The right Church is one Spirit.

There is *one body*, and *one Spirit*, saith *Paul*; and through *unity* of *Spirit*, they become *one body*. Now as the *body* of man consists of *many* members, and but *one soul* comprehends, quickens, moves, and governs *all* these members, making the *eye* to see, the *hand* to work, the *foot* to walk, &c. So the *body of Christ*, which is the Church, consisting of *many* members, hath yet but *one* and the *same* HOLY SPIRIT, which comprehends, quickens, moves and governs them *all*, and brings them into a most *near* and *intimate* society together, and *inables* each member, to its *several* office, according to its *place* and *use* in the body of Christ.

And as a *member*, being *cut* off from the body, the soul doth not follow it, to cause it to live out of the *unity* of the body: So he that is *divided* from the *true body* of Christ, the *Spirit*, doth not follow him to make him live *single* by himself; and so neither is the body of Christ without the *Spirit*, nor the *Spirit* of *Christ* without the *body*.

And as the same *soul* in *several* members, acts *severally*, and yet is but *one* and the *same* soul in all; so the same *holy Spirit* in several Believers, works *severally*, as it pleaseth, and yet is but the same *holy Spirit* in them *all*.

So that the *whole* body of Christ, that is all *Believers* in the world have but *one* and the *same holy Spirit* in them, and this *unity of Spirit* in the Church, is one *strong* bond of its *peace*. Among *mankinde* in general, and more nearly among *kindred*, there is *unity of flesh*, but because there is *difference* of *spirit*, there is much envie, hatred, strife and variance in that *unity of flesh*; but now the *members* of the *body*, are not only *one flesh*, but *one soul* or *spirit* too, and so there is *always peace* and *agreement* between them. And so the *true* Church of Christ is not only *one body*, but *one Spirit* too, and this makes it *one* indeed. For as this *Spirit*, is the *love* and *connexion* of the *Father* and the *Son*; so it is also our *love* and *connexion* in the *Father* and the *Son*; and as the *Father* and the *Son* live in *unity of Spirit*, so all *Believers* live the unity of the same Spirit in them.

Now they on whom the *Spirit* was first given, after *Christ* was *glorified*, had also with the Spirit the *gift of tongues*, the Spirit given being for the *communion* of the Church, & so they spake with the *tongues* of all, the *Church* having through the *communion* of the Spirit, its *society* and *consociation*: For he that speaks by the *Spirit* in the Church, where *all* are one *Spirit* in Christ; he speaks with the *tongues* of *all*; and when a Believer hears *another* speak, it is, as if he *himself* did speak; and when *one* speaks, it is, as if *all* spake; for he speaks in the *unity of Spirit* with them, and so speaks the *same* doctrine of the Gospel and *minde* of Christ, which they *all* have equally *heard* and *learned* from *God*.

Hence it is evident, that it is nothing to have the *outward form* of a *Church*, even as our *souls* could wish; except there be, *inwardly* in that Church, the *Spirit of Christ*; for it is not *unity* of *form* will ever make the Church *one*, but *unity of Spirit*: That Church then that is destitute of the *Spirit*, in its *laws*, *orders*, *constitutions*, *forms*, *members*, *officers*: what true *unity* can that have, in all its *uniformity*?

And this is the *second* bond of the *true* Churches *Unity*:

Unity of Spirit.

Who break this bond of Unity.

Now *they* break this bond of the Churches *unity*, that *live* in their *own spirits*, and not in *Christs*; for they that live in a *different spirit from* the true *Church*, what *unity* can they possibly have

have with it? They then that live in their own *humane reason, understanding, thoughts, counsel, wils, ends*, they live quite and clean out of the *unity* of this *Church*, yea, in direct *enmity* against it; seeing our own *corrupt* and *earthly spirits*, are most contrary to the *Holy* and *Heavenly Spirit* of Christ, in which the *Church* lives. Wherefore we may learn hence, what to *judge* of those men, that cry out much for the *peace* of the Church, and yet themselves, neither *live* in, nor are *led by*, the *Spirit* of the Church; but either by their *own Spirits*, or *Antichrists*.

2. *They* that labour to joyn men into *one body* with the *Church*, that are not one *Spirit* with it, do marr the *peace* of it: For as *unity of Spirit* in the Church is the *bond* of peace, so *diversity of Spirit* is the *breach* of peace, and therefore to *preserve* the peace of the Church, *none* are to joyn themselves to this *one body*, that are not of this *one Spirit*.

3. *They* that being of the *Church*, do any thing in it by their *own Spirits*, and not by *Christs*, prejudice the *peace* of the Church; for the *true* Church is such a *body* which is to have all its *communion* in the *Spirit*. And therefore when any *pray* or *prophesie*, or the like, in the strength of *natural parts*, or *humane studies* and *invention* onely, and do not pray and prophesie in the *Spirit*, they break the *unity* of the Church; for the *faithful* have *communion* with one another; onely so far forth as the *Spirit* is manifested in each.

Now if any shall say, *How may I know Christs Spirit in these acts and duties from a mans own?* *Quest.*

I answer, That as by the *Word of God* we can judge of all *other* Words and Doctrines; and as by the *Faith of Christ* we can judge of all *other* beliefs, so by the *Spirit of Christ* we can judge of all *other* spirits; and can know where is the *same spirit*, and where is a *different* or a *contrary* spirit; as the *members* of the *body* can judge of the *one-ness* of *Spirit* that is among *themselves*. *Answ.*

The *third* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*, is, ONE HOPE OF OUR CALLING.

Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: As *all* Believers are called by *one calling* (which is the *inward* and *effectual* voyce of God to the soul, by his Spirit through the Gospel) so they are

The right Church have one hope of their calling.

are all called into *one* blessed *hope* of obtaining the *Kingdom* and *glory* of God. And no *one* is called to this hope more then *another*, or hath more *interest* or *share* in it then *another*. *Fishes* that live in the Sea, though some be *greater*, and some *less*, yet *none* hath *more* interest or share in it then *another*; but *all* being alike *produced* in it, *enjoy* it alike: and *creatures* that live on the *earth*, though some be *greater*, and some *less*, yet all enjoy the *Sun* and *Ayr* alike; and yet *nearer*, the *members* of the *body*, though of *different* quantity, form and office, yet *all* have *alike* interest in the *head* and all its *senses*, and in the *soul* and all its *faculties*: So all the faithful enjoy *Christ* alike, and in him the *Spirit* and the *Father*; and no Believer hath more interest in *Christ* and *God*, then *another*.

So that *all* the faithful are called to the *same things*, and *God* gives not *more*, nor *better* things to *one* then to *another*, but he gives *immortality*, *glory*, *eternal life*, *the Kingdom of Heaven*, which is the inheritance of the *Saints*, or which is all one, *himself*, alike to *all*, and makes *all* to sit *alike* in heavenly places in *Christ*, and in the *Father*.

All the faithful then are *equally* called to an *Unity of hope*, and none can *hope* for *greater* or *better* things then another. It was a very *carnal* thing in the *Mother* of *Zebedee's* children, to desire of *Christ*, That *one* of her *Sons* might sit at his *right hand*, and another at his *left hand*, in his Kingdom, where *all* alike sit at his *right hand*, and *none* at all at his *left*. Indeed in the *Kingdoms* of *men*, some have *greater* estates then *others*, and are in higher *Honour* and *Authority*; and this breeds *envie*, and *emulation*, and *strife*, and *distances*, &c. but in the *Sons Kingdom*, and in the *Fathers*, all that are counted *worthy* to dwell therein, do *alike* inherit *all things*; *All things are yours*, saith *Paul*: And *he that overcomes shall inherit all things*; saith *John*: And the *least* believer hath no *less*, and the *greatest* hath no *more*; and this causes *unity* and *peace* among them. We see what a strong bond of *peace* and *agreement*, *unity of hope* is in them that *travel* together, that *fight* together, that *labour* together; and so much more in *them* who are *equally* called by *God* to the *Kingdom* of *God*.

And this is the *third* bond, of the true Churches *Unity*:

Now

Unity of Hope.

Now *they* break this *bond* of the Churches *Unity*, that live out of this *hope* of the *Church*, whose *hope* is in *earthly*, *carnal*, *base* things; who pretending to be *Christians*, yet live onely in the *hopes* of *men*, in hopes of *worldly* profit, honour, preferment, and the attaining and enjoyment of the things of *this* life, which they, according to the *eagerness* of their *hopes*, prosecute mightily, by all ways and means. These men, I say, break the *Unity* of the *Church*: for what *true Unity* can they have with the *true* Church, that live not in *unity of hope* with it? Seeing *worldly hopes* carry men *one* way, and the *hopes* of *Believers* carry them *another*: *carnal hopes* make men leave *God* for the *World*; and the *hope* of *Saints* makes them leave the *world* for *God*: Wherefore they that *differ* in their *hopes*, which are their *ends*, must needs *differ* in their *ways* and *works*; and so he that lives out of the *hope* of the *Church*, lives also out of the *unity* of it.

Who break this bond of Unity.

The *fourth* bond of the *true Churches* unity, is,
ONE LORD.

The *right Church* hath not *many* Lords, but *One*; and this *one* and *only* Lord, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*: And so all the *subjects* of this Kingdom are *fellow servants* to *one Lord*, tō whom they do owe *equal* obedience; and this also is a strong *bond* of *Unity*.

The right Church hath one Lord.

For when there are *divers* Lords, there are *divers* minds, and wils, and ends, and so divers *laws*; and these breed *divisions*, and *dissentions*, and *wars* among men; but where there is but *one Lord*, there is also but *one Law*; and where people live by *one Law*, under *one Lord*, unto whom all are equally subject, this breeds *peace* and *union*.

Now the *Lordship* of the *Church*, is the *Royal Prerogative* of *Christ*, and no *creature* must presume to arrogate this *honour* to *himself*; seeing unto the very *Angels* he hath not put in subjection *this world to come*, whereof we speak. And for *men*, *Christ* hath charged his *own Apostles* (who if there were any *difference* among Believers, might undoubtedly challenge the *preheminence*) I say, *Christ* hath charged even *them* on this sort, *Matth.* 23. 10. *Be not ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ; but he that*

is greateſt among you, ſhall be your ſervant: That is, you may and ought to be *ſervants* to one another, but not *maſters*: and this ſame doctrine the Apoſtle *James* preacheth, *Jam.* 3. 1. *My brethren* (ſaith he) *be not many Maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation:* it is not fit for *brethren*, who are *equal* among themſelves, to make themſelves *maſters* over one another. *Chriſt* alſo hath ſpoken again, ſo plainly to this matter, *Math.* 20. that one would wonder, that ever the *Beaſt*, or his *image*, ſhould dare to arrogate to themſelves, *Lordſhip* over the People of *God*, in ſo clear a light; *Ye know* (ſaith *Chriſt* to the twelve) *that the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe Dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe authority over them: but it ſhall not be ſo amongſt you:* he ſpeaks it peremptorily; that ſome *Believers* ſhould not exerciſe *dominion* and *authority* over Believers; no not the *greateſt* over the *leaſt*, all being *fellow ſervants* alike, under one *Lord*. Wherefore they that are *puffed* up in their hearts againſt their *fellow ſervants*, might better think thus with themſelves, why Chriſt is *our Lord*, as well as *theirs*, and is as much over *us* as over *them*; and *we* are not over our fellow ſervants, nor *they* under *us*; but *both* of us are *equally* under *Chriſt*, and *Chriſt* is equally *over* us *both*; and ſo *Chriſt* hath given *us* the ſame laws, he hath given *them*; to wit, that we ſhould *believe* in him, and *love* one another; and he expects the ſame *obedience* from *us*, as from *them*; and ſo we are not to *command* one another; but are all alike to be *commanded* by him. It was the *evil ſervant*, that beat his *fellow ſervants* upon hopes of the delay of his *Maſters* coming.

And this is the *fourth* bond of the *true* Churches *Unity*, *Unity of Lord.*

Who break this bond of the Churches Unity.

Now they break *this* bond, of the Churches *Unity*, that either make *themſelves*, or others, *Lords* over the Church, beſides *Chriſt*, and parcel out this *one Kingdom* of the Son to *many Lords*, to the great *diſhonour* of Chriſt, and *diſ-union* of the Church.

The *Pope* was the firſt that profeſſed himſelf to be the *general Maſter* in the whole *Church* of *God*: and after the Pope, a *general Councel* took this honour to it ſelf; and by degrees, this *laſt* became as *hard*, yea, a *harder taſkmaſter* to the Church, then the *former*. After, when *particular* Kingdoms fell off from the *Pope* and

and his *Antichristian Church*, the *mystery of iniquity*, was not by this means wholly *dissolved*; but only was *contracted* and brought into a *less compass*; for then the *Archbishop* made himself general *master* of the Church in each particular *Kingdom*, as the *Pope* before had done in *all*; and after the *Archbishop* rises up a *National Assembly*, as the *General Councel* after the *Pope*; and *each* of these in their *courses*, usurp Lordship over the *Church* of Christ, to the sad *dissolution* of its *unity*.

Most *evident* then it is, that during the time of the *Apostasie*, the Church hath been most miserably *Lorded* even amongst us; for the *Priest* he *Lorded* it over the *People*, the *Arch-deacon* over the *Priest*, the *Dean* over the *Arch deacon*, the *Bishop* over the *Dean*, and the *Arch-bishop* over the *Bishop*; under which *woful* bondage the Church *cried* out, as *Isa.*26. *O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us.* And is this *bondage* of the Church now *eased*, by casting off those strange *Lords*? Yea, do not men rather seek to *encrease* it, by setting yet stranger over it, whose *names* are so full of *mystery*, that the *common people* cannot understand them? for now they would have the *Classical Presbytery* set over the *Congregational*, and the *Provincial* over the *Classical*, and the *National* over the *Provincial*; for so it is Voted, THAT IT IS LAWFULL AND AGREEABLE TO THE WORD OF GOD, THAT THERE BE A SUBORDINATION OF CONGREGATIONAL, CLASSICAL, PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH: Now here is *mystery*, and nothing but a certain rising up into the *old power*, under a *new name*. And mark how they *prove* this *subordination* of *Congregational*, *Classical*, *Provincial* and *National* Assemblies, to wit, by that Scripture, *Mat.*18. where it is written, *If thy brother trespass against thee, and will neither hear thy admonition nor councel, nor the admonition and councel of other brethren*, TELL THE CHURCH; that is, the Congregation of the faithful. Now from this *place* they prove the fore mentioned *subordination* of Assemblies, just as the *Pope* once proved himself to be above the *Emperour*, to wit, because it is written, *Gen.*1. *That God made two great lights, the Sun to rule by day, and the Moon by night.* Now if this might be

The Assemblies vote for their government.

brought *about*, which they *design*, the Church would be so far from being *eased* of its strange *Lords* that it should have them exceedingly *multiplied*; for what is a National *Assembly*, but an *Archbishop* multiplied? and what a Provincial *Assembly*, but a *Bishop* multiplied? And a *Classical*, but a *Dean* and *Arch deacon* multiplied? And thus the former Lords being removed, they would in their stead, cause the Church to *swarm* with *Classical*, *Provincial* and *National* Lords, and would by no means suffer *Christs* own Kingdom to return to his own *Lordship* and *Dominion*. And thus whilest they by secular *power*, seek to enforce these *Ecclesiastical Lords* over the Church, they absolutely *break* in pieces the *unity* of it, even whilst they bear the *simple* people in hand, that they above all other men seek to preserve it: seeing the *plurality* of Lords, is alwayes the cause of *Schisms* and *divisions* in the Church, which can never be one but under one *Lord*, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *fifth* bond of the *true* Churches *Unity*, is, ONE FAITH.

The right Church hath one faith.

The true Church of *God* hath but *one Faith*, wrought by *one* Spirit, apprehending the *same* Christ, or the same *living* and *eternal* truth of God. So that *Abraham*, and *Moses*, and *David*, and all the *Prophets*, and all the *Apostles*, and *we* who now believe, and *all* that shall believe hereafter, all have, and *do*, and *shall* live in the same *mystery of faith*; that is, *Believers* in *all* Ages, do not live their *own* lives, but all live the *life* of Christ in their own soul and bodies, *each* one receiving *equally* from Christ; the *life* of Christ, which they *all* live *alike* in him, being *one* with him; as the *branches* live equally, the life of the *Vine*; and *one branch*, lives it not more then another. Through *faith* then every *Christian* is carryed out of *himself*, and all his *own* things into *Christ*, whom he apprehends with all his *fulness*, for his *own*; and in this *faith*, all Christians are *equal*, and none hath a *better* or *worse faith* then another.

So that in regard of *faith* also, there is among the true Church *unity* and *equality*.

For all *Believers* have *one* and the same *faith*, of the *operation* of God, wrought by the same *Spirit*, which raised up *Christ* from

from the dead; and that *faith* which the *Spirit* works, neither *sin*, *death* nor the *devil* can possibly *prevail* against; and so the *faith* of the operation of the *Spirit*, is altogether *invincible* in all the faithful.

Among true *Christians*, some are not *justified* by *faith*, and some by *works*, but *all* are saved through *faith*, without the works of the *law*.

Among *true* Christians, *one* Believers *faith* doth not apprehend *one word*, and anothers, *another* word; but the faith of *each*, and of *all* apprehends *one* and the *same* word of *truth* and *life*, which is Christ *himself*, Yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever.

Among Believers, one doth not *live* his own life, and another *Christs*, which indeed would make them very *different* and *unequal*, but all live *Christs* life alike, and none their *own*.

And thus is the *whole* Church knit together in *Unity* of *Faith*.

Unity of faith preserves peace.

Now this *unity of faith* is mightily able to preserve *peace* among Believers, notwithstanding *diversity* either of *inward* gifts, or *outward* works.

1. Notwithstanding diversity of inward gifts.

1. *Unity* of *Faith* preserves *peace*, notwithstanding *diversity* of inward *gifts*, inasmuch as we are not made *members* of Christs body, through such and such *gifts*, but meerly through *faith*; and so he that hath *one* or a *less* gift, is equally a *member* of Christ, through his *faith*, with him that hath *another* or a greater *gift*; and so *unity of faith*, which makes us all *one body* in Christ, is to keep us *one*, notwithstanding *diversity* of *gifts* and *operations*; and *diversity* of *gifts* are in no wise to *divide* where there is *unity* of *faith*. Further, among them that *believe*, where there is the *more gift*, there is only the more *labour*; but there is not *another*, or a *better Christ*; and where there is the *less* gift, there is the *same* Christ, equally *enjoyed* through *faith*: He that had *five* Talents given him, brought in *five* that he had gained; and he that had *ten*, *ten*: but he that brought in *most* Talents, had not *more* of Christ then he that brought in *fewer*; and he that brought in *fewer*, had not *less* of him, then *he* that brought in *more*; but each having Christ alike by faith, brought in the *exercise* of his several *gifts*. And so *unity of Faith* is to keep us one, notwithstanding *diversity* of *inward gifts*.

2. Notwithstanding diversity of outward works.

And secondly, it is to keep us *one*, notwithstanding *diversity of outward works*. For *unity of Faith* makes all believers *righteous* alike, though they differ in outward *works*. For in *Christs* Kingdom each ones *righteousness* is reckoned by his *faith*, not by his *outward* works. And therefore *Paul*, *Heb* 13.7. having reckoned up many *excellent* works of the Fathers, doth not *enjoyn* us to follow their *works*, but their *faith*, saying, *Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation*; seeing the *unity* of the *Church* stands in *unity of faith*; and there may be *unity* of *faith* in *diversity* of *Works*; for *faith* uses *freely* any outward *laws*, *manners*, *forms*, *works*, so fare as they may tend to the *mortifying* of our *bodies*, and the *edifying* of our *neighbours*; wherein *faith* also will *judge* for it self, and will suffer no *body* to judge for it: and in all *change* of *works*, *faith* is the *same*, and changes not; and the *Church* still remains *one*, through *unity* of *faith*, in the midst of *variety*, and *diversity* of *outward works*. And therefore where *men* are accounted *Christians* for such and such *outward works* sake, and this *unity* of *faith* is not *taught* and *received*, *there* the *gates* of *hell* do certainly *prevail*.

And this is the *fifth* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*,

Unity of Faith.

Who break this bond of the Churches Unity.

Now *they* break *this* bond of the Churches *unity*, *that* live *out* of this *faith* of Gods Elect, seeing it is written, *That the just shall live by faith*: And therefore *they* that live by *sense* in the things of the *world*, or by *form* in the things of *God*, they live out of this *faith* and *unity* of the Church.

1. They that live by *sense* in the things of the *world*, break this *bond* of the Churches *unity*; even such as minde, and affect, and love, and desire *earthly things*, and have all their *joy*, *comfort*, *sweetness*, *satisfaction*, *support* and *confidence* in the *creature*; these live out of the *unity* of the *Church*; *seeing the life* of *sense* is clean contrary to the *life* of *faith*: *Faith* carrying us to live in *God* out of the *creature*, and *sense* carrying us to live in the *creature* out of *God*.

2. They that live by *form* in the things of *God*, whether it be called *Conformity*, as the *Prelates* called it; or *Uniformity*, as the *Rhemists* do also break *this bond* of the Churches *unity*. For to live upon

upon this or that *form* of *religion*, or *worship*, ſo as to think our ſelves *good Chriſtians* therefore, and others *evil*, that ſhall live *otherwiſe*, is to fall *apparently* from the *faith* of the Church, ſeeing *faith* doth not *live* upon this or that *form* of Religion, but it lives on *Chriſt* only in *every* duty; and whatſoever *form* it may uſe for a *help* to the infirmity of the *fleſh*, yet in the *uſe* of forms it lives *above* forms in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his *fulneſs*.

The *ſixth* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*, is,
ONE BAPTISME.

The *true* Church, which is the *body* or *fleſh* of Chriſt, hath but *one* and the ſelf ſame *Baptiſm*, by which it is *purified*; which is the *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*: For the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks here of *that Baptiſm* wherein the *Whole* Church is *one*; which is not the *Baptiſm* of the *ſign*, which hath often been *altered* and *changed*, but the *Baptiſm* of the *ſubſtance*, which comprehends all *believers*, and all *ages*, and under *ſeveral* and *various diſpenſations*; and was the ſame before Chriſts comming in the fleſh, as ſince; *believers* both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, of the *Old* and *New* Teſtament, drinking *all* alike into *one Spirit*, though *theſe* more plentifully then thoſe: So that, though many have wanted the *Baptiſm* of *water*, yet not one member of the *true* Church, hath wanted the *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*, from whence our *true Chriſtianity* begins.

Now this *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*, is the onely *Baptiſm* that hath *power* and *efficacy* to make Chriſtians *one*: For through the *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit* it is, that the *Church* is made *one body*, as *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*: The *true* Church, drinks *all* into *one* Spirit (as ye have heard) and not into *many*; and through *one Spirit* are *baptized* into *one body*, and not into *many*; and *believers* are never *truly* one, till they partake of this *one Baptiſm*.

Now this *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*, as it is but *one*, ſo it is *adminiſtred* onely by *one Chriſt*; as *John* Baptiſt witneſſeth, *Math.* 3. 11. ſaying, *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier then I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear, he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire*: For

as none can *give* the *Son* but the *Father*, ſo none can *baptize* with the *Spirit* but the *Son*; for this is Chriſts *proper* and *peculiar Baptiſm* from the Throne of his *glory*, and no *mans* whatſoever; this he hath reſerved in his *own power*, and hath not given it into any *mans power*.

And this is the *ſixth* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*:

One Baptiſm.

Who break this bond of Unity.

Now *they* break *this* bond of the Churches *unity*, that content themſelves onely with the *Baptiſm* of *water*, being deſtitute of the *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*; and ſo remain in the *uncleanneſs* of all their *old* corruptions and luſts, and in all the *filthineſs* and *pollutions* of *fleſh* and *ſpirit*; by reaſon of which they can have no *true peace* and *agreement* in heart and Spirit, and Nature, with *thoſe* who are cleanſed from theſe pollutions, and are *waſhed* and *juſtified purified* and *ſanctified* in the *name*, and by the *Spirit* of *God*: For what *agreement* can there be between *them* that live in all the *corruptions* of *ſinful men*, and them that *live* in the *renewing* of the *Holy Spirit*? So that it is not the *waſhing* of *water*, but the *waſhing* of the *Spirit*, that is the true *ground* of the true Churches *unity*; and they that *want* this *Baptiſm* of the *Spirit*, though they have been baptized with *water* never ſo *much*, live quite and clean out of the *unity* of the *Church*.

The *ſeventh* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*, is,

ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, WHO IS ABOVE ALL, AND THROUGH ALL, AND IN YOU ALL.

The right Church hath one God, and Father of them all.

And *this*, though it be *laſt* named, yet it is the *firſt fountain* and *original* of the Churches *unity*, even *One God and Father of all*.

The true Church is a Kingdom of Brethren.

The *true* Church is a *Kingdom of brethren*, who have all, one *God* and *Father*, from whom *all* receive *alike* the *divine nature*; which being *one* and the *ſame* in all, without any *difference*, makes them *all one*, and *equal*, that are born of *God*. For among theſe, *none* have a *better* Father then *another*; nor none hath a more excellent *nature* then another, but all receive the *ſame nature* from the

the *same God* and *Father*; and so are *brethren* in the *Lord*; and this also is another *strong* bond of *unity*.

For they having all *one God and Father*; First, *all* are alike *dear* to *him*, because all are alike *born* of him, and so he loves not one *more* or *less* then another, but comprehends *all* in *one* and the *same* love with *Jesus Christ*. And this *truly* known, will restrain *believers* from *wronging* one another, when they *know*, that such are every whit as *dear*, to God, as *themselves*; and that God hath as *great* and *tender love* to them, and *care* over them.

Where all are, 1. Alike dear to God.

Secondly, All are alike *near* to *us*, because of this *one God and Father*; and so among *true Christians* there can be no such *divisions*, and *factions*, and *sidings*, as among *worldly people*; because *one Christian* is not *nearer* to us then *another*; and so we do not *take part* with *one* against *another*, but *all* are alike *near* to us: and so without any *respect of persons*, we embrace *all* that are *born of God*, with an *equal love*, and seek the good of *each one*, yea, of *every one* as well as *any one*.

2. Alike dear to us.

Now this *God and Father* of the *Church*, he farther *describes* that he is,

This one God and Father of the true Church, is,

1. ABOVE ALL; The *Father* is *above* the *children*, and *they* are not above *one another*, but *he* is above them *all*, ruling and over-ruling them; and so they are not to *live* in their *own Wills*, which might cause *difference*, but in their *Fathers Will*, which causes *unity*; and thus his being *above them all*, keeps them in *peace*; Whereas we *see*, where *children* live without due *subjection*, having *no body* above them, as it falls out sometimes among *Orphans*, there they are often *unquiet* and *grievous* to one another: But God is *above* all his children, and so keeps them in *due subjection* to him and in *quietness* and *love* with one another, daily composing *their differences* through his *unity*.

1. Above you all.

2. He is, THROUGH ALL; as having *communicated* to *all* his *own nature*; and so according to this *nature* of his, which he hath *communicated* to all alike and all alike *possest*, he is *through them all*. And hereupon they *all* must needs be *one*, because *God* never *differs* from *himself*, but his *nature* is at *unity* with *it self* in all, in whom it *dwels*; and brings them *all* out of the *differences* of *their natures*, into the unity of *Gods*.

2. Through you all.

3. He is, IN THEM ALL. *God* is such a *Father* as hath his *presence* in all his *Children*; he hath a *special* presence in *them*,

3. In them all.

dwelling in *them* after the *maner* he dwelt in *Christ*, though not in that *measure*; for *God* dwels in *Christ* and *Christians* otherwise then in the *rest* of the *creatures*; to wit, by *communicating* his *nature* to them through his *union* with them: And wherever *God* communicates his *nature*, there he is present most *truly*, *powerfully*, and *gloriously* indeed: And such a *presence* of God in his *Church* as this, keeps it in *constant* and *unchangeable unity*: For how can *they* who have *God thus* dwelling in *them*, and who again *thus* dwell in *God*, be at *odds* among *themselves*?

And this is the *seventh* bond of the *true* Churches *unity*;

ONE GOD AND FATHER, &c.

Who break this bond of Unity.

Now *they* break *this bond* of the Churches *unity*, who have not this *one God* and *Father* of the Church to be their *God*, and their *Father*, who will needs call God *Father*, and yet are *none* of his *children*; who will be of the *Church of God*, and yet are not *born of God*; and so *live* according to their *own natures*, and not according to *Gods*; *all* these. I say, *break* the *unity* of the *Church*, seeing we can no longer live in *peace*, then this *one God and Father* is *above us*, and *through us*, and *in us*. All they then that will needs be *members* of the *Church* through *outward profession*, and yet are none of this *spiritual brotherhood*, as having no *descent* from this *heavenly Father*, they *break* this *unity* of the Church, even *all* the children that are onely born *after the flesh*, and so still *live* according to the *natures* of *men*, and are not *born* of the *Spirit*, to live after the *nature* of *God*.

There is no other bond of the Churches unity besides these seven.

These now are the *seven* bonds of the true Churches *true unity* and *peace*; and there is no *other* bond of unity *necessary* for the *Church*, besides these: For if there had, the *Apostle* being guided by the *Spirit*, would never have *omitted* it. And therefore the *more* are they to *blame*, who making a *great noise*, and lifting up their *voyce* on *high* for *unity*, *peace* and *agreement* in the Church, yet do wholly *neglect* these *seven bonds* of the true Churches *unity*; and cry up *one* instead of them *all*; and that is *External Uniformity*. So that *now* among *them*, *one body*, and *one Spirit*, and *one hope of our calling*, and *one Lord*, and *one Faith*, and *one Baptisme*, and *one God and Father of all*, are *nothing* at all to the *Churches unity*, but their *uniformity* is *all in all*; and *whoever* breaks *that* (which yet they have no *Scripture* of God to *enjoyn*,

It is a wicked thing to cry up Uniformity in the stead of this Unity.

no

no nor once to *name*) *he* is the man, with *them*, that breaks the *Churches peace*; and so, *Antichrist-like*, they have *exalted* their *single uniformity* above this *seven-fold unity* of the *Church*, and so have (as much as in them lies) made the *word* of the *Spirit* void, through their *carnal* (that I say no more) *traditions*. For a man may *break* all these *seven* bonds of the Churches *unity*, and yet be a very good *member* of *their* Church, if he onely *observe* their *uniformity*; but if he break *this*, he is a *Schismatike* and an *Heretike*, and not *worthy to live* in their account, though he *live* in all the bonds of this *true* and *spiritual unity*.

Wherefore to escape these *snares*, let all *believers* know assuredly, that these *seven bonds* named by the *Apostle*, which are all *spiritual*, and of *God*, and not one of them *carnal*, or of *man*, are the *onely bonds* of the true *Churches* true *unity*; and that *whoever* of their *own* minds presume to *add* to *these*, are guilty of *adding* to the *word* of *God*, themselves being but *wretched creatures*; and so *involve* themselves in all the *curses* written in his *Book*, among which *death* and *hell* have their place. And let us *further* know, that whoever do *combine* together to make themselves *one*, *out* of the fore-named *unity*, though they *call* themselves the *Church* never so much, yet they are but *sects*, and *schismes*, and *divisions*, and *factions* rent from the *true* Church of *God*. For *such men* choose and frame to *themselves* some *singular* way of *worship*, *form*, *order*, &c. whereby they think they *excell* other *Christians*, and so cause the *simple* and *ignorant* (which are the *multitude* of people) to follow them; *especially* having *countenance* of *worldly authority*; by which means *both* they and their *followers*, depart from the *true unity* of the *Church*: For when this *seven-fold* spiritual unity is *neglected*, *Christianity* is torn in pieces, into as many *sects* as the *world* and *Devil* please, till there be no *foutsteps* left, either of *faith* or *love*. So that whatever these men *pretend*, most *certain* it is, that all *confederacies* in the *Church*, of outward *orders*, *forms*, *rites*, *laws*, *ceremonies*, *disciplines*, which are *necessarily* enforced by the *secular power*, seduced by the *Ecclesiastical*, will never *hold* the *Church* together; but all these *are*, and *have* proved, and *will* prove, rather a *Wall of partition* in the Church, then a *bond of union*; and if they *seem* to work *union*, yet it is no *other* then the *mingling clay* and *iron together*, which no *pains* nor *art* can perfectly *compound*. For all *peace* and *union* in the Church, knit by *other* bonds, then are

here *named*, is no ſpiritual union, neither will it *ſtand*.

And therefore *dear Chriſtians* and *believers*, ſeeing we have *ſeven bonds* of *unity*, all of Gods own making, to make us *one*, let not *diverſity* of *forms* and *rites*, which are but *ſorry* things of mans *making*, *ſeparate* and *divide* us: but ſeeing *each* of *theſe* bonds are *able* to make us *one*, how *much* one, ſhould *all* of them together make us?

How the union which God hath wrought among Believers, ſhould be preſerved in the communion, which they have here in this world, with one another.

And thus having ſhewed from the *word*, how all Chriſtians and *believers* are made *one* by *God*; the *next* thing, I ſhall aim at, is, to ſhew how they may continue *one* among *themſelves*, in reference to that *communion* they have with *one another*, whilſt they *ſojourn* in this *world*, flowing from the former *union*; that ſo all *darkneſs* and *miſtakes*, which now', even *many believers* are *grievouſly* inwrapped in, may be *diſpelled* and done away, and we may live in this *pure* and *perfect* union with *one another* in *God*, making all *outward* things *ſubſervient* hereunto, and none of them *prejudicial*.

To preſerve that peace among our ſelves we have in Chriſt. 1. We muſt know ſome things otherwiſe then we do. Particularly the Churches Government. Church government two fold. Immediate, Mediate. Gods immediate government twofold. 1. The government of his ſpecial providence,

And to this *purpoſe* I conceive, we are,

1. To *know* ſome things: } And both *otherwiſe* then *yet* we *ſeem*, either to *know* or *do* them.
And
2. To *do* other things: }

1. To *preſerve* our *peace* we have in Chriſt, we muſt be *inſtructed* aright, in the *matter* of the Churches GOVERNMENT, becauſe the *miſtake* in this *thing* is ſo great a cauſe of *controverſie* and *diviſion* among us at this *day*. For if the *true Church* hath its true *government*, without any ſuch *forms* and *laws* and *power*, as is now ſo *earneſtly* contended for, there is no *reaſon* we ſhould *fall out* and *divide* for theſe things.

Now the *Government* of the Church, is *twofold*.

1. There is that *Government*, which God exerciſes *immedialy* by himſelf.

And 2. That *Government* which he exerciſes *mediately*, and by the *faithfull*.

The *firſt* of theſe, that is, Gods *immediate Government*, is alſo two fold:

1. The *Government* of his *ſpeciall providence*.
2. The *Government* of his *ſpiritual preſence*.

The *firſt* ſort, of Gods *immediate Government* of his *Church*, is

is the Government of his *special providence*, and this is a most *strange, wonderful* and *glorious Government*. This was that *Government* of *God*, over the *Church* of *Israel*, when he took his own *Nation*, out of the midst of *another* Nation, by *temptations, signs, wonders*, by a *strong hand*, and a *stretched* out *arm*, and *great* terrours, when he led them through the *red Sea*, and through the *wilderness*, in *paths* that were not *trodden*, when he *fed* them with *bread* from *heaven*, and water out of the *Rocks*, when he *suffered no man to do them wrong, but reproved even Kings for their sake*, and through multitudes of *enemies* and *oppositions*, led them into the Land of *Canaan*. Thus, *God* led that *Church*, from *bondage* to *liberty*, from *tribulation* to *quietness*; from a *sordid condition*, to *honour* and *renown*; from a strange *land*, to a *land* of *inheritance*; and from *slavery* to a *Kingdom*. And this was a *glorious Government* indeed, standing in Gods immediate *conduct* from heaven, far above all *humane councels, wisdom, stratagems*, or any thing else of *mans* contriving and acting: and this *government* of God is so far beyond all *humane apprehensions*, that according to this, it is said, *His way is the Sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known*.

And is not this kinde of Gods *government*, of the spiritual *Church* of the *New Testament*, every whit as *wonderful* and *glorious*, as was that of the *visible Church* of the *Old Testament*? For though the *beginning* of it was *small* and *low* in the world, yet did it receive *encrease* with the *encrease* of *God*, and was *preserved, maintained* and *enlarged* in the world, notwithstanding all the *rage* and *cruelties* of the *persecuting* Heathen *Emperours*, for *three hundred* years together; and ever *since*, God *himself* hath taken the *conduct* of this *Church*, and hath carryed it *through difficulties, distresses, reproaches, prisons, torments, deaths* to *ease, liberty, comfort, joy, salvation, glory, life, happiness*; and this hath been *Gods* glorious *government* of the Church *hitherto*. And at this *present* time the Church of God *wants* not this *government*, among all the *troubles, confusions, wars*, and *desolations* of the Kingdom, but God is now as *near* his *true* Church as *ever*, and *supports* it and *comforts* it, and *guides* it as a *skilful Pilot*, in such sort, that though the *floods* lift up their *voice* and *billows* against it, yet they cannot *sink* it; For *the Lord on high is mightier then the mighty waves of the Sea*: And so *still*, even at *this* day, the

Lord leads his *flock* through the midst of *Wolves* and *Lyons*, yea through the midst of *Devils*, in admirable and invincible *safety*, and gives them *light* in *darkness*, *counsels* in *difficulties*, and *successe* in all *attempts*, above and beyond, both all the *power*, and all the *expectation* of the *world*.

Now *note* here, that this *kinde* of *government* of the Church, *God* doth not mannage, according to the *wisdom* and *thoughts*, no not of his *very people*, but wholly according to the *counsel* of his *own will*, and the *thoughts* of his own *heart*: doing *things*, that they must not know *yet*, but must know *afterwards*; yea, *such* things as for the *present* seem *absurd*, and absolutely *destructive*. And this is the *usual* way and order of Gods *governing* his *Saints*. That of *Luther*, on *Gen.* 39. is worth our *minding* here. "I (saith "he) have often endevoured to prescribe certain wayes and me-"thods to God, which he should use in the governing of his "Church. Ah Lord (said I) I would have this to be thus done, "in this order, with this event. But God did altogether con-"trary to what I did desire. Then again thought I, why, my "counsel is not differing from the glory of God, but it will make "much for the sanctifying of thy name, the gathering and en-"creasing thy Kingdom, the propagating the knowledge of thy "word; and to be brief, it is a most excellent and profitable de-"sign. But God no doubt laughed at this wisdom of mine, and "said, Go to now, I know thee to be wise and learned, but "this was never my manner, that either *Peter* or *Martin* (mean-"ing himself) should teach, or form, or govern, or lead me. "For I am not a passive, but an active God; who use always to "lead, govern, form. Now (saith he) it is very grievous, that "our wisdom should be only passive, and that we are commanded "to mortifie and slay it; and therefore many, who could not "endure this mortification, have fallen horribly. And thus this *kinde* of Gods *government*, is wholly according to his *own wisdom* and *counsel*, and wholly *without*, yea *contrary* to *ours*. And thus we are in some measure acquainted with the *government* of Gods *special providence*, over his *Church*.

Ego sæpe certas rationes conatus sum Deo præscribere, quibus uteretur, in administratione ecclesiæ, &c. Luther. *in Gen 39 tom. 6. fo. 542.*

2. The *second* sort of Gods *immediate Government* of his Church, is the *Government* of his *spiritual Presence*, or *Gods* government *within* us. For the *right* Church, is the *City of God*, and hath God in the *midst* of it, being *built* and *framed*, and that

2. The Government of his spiritual presence.

as

according to *every* part of it, by the *Spirit*, to be the *habitation* of God; this is the *temple of the living God, as God hath said*, and *God is in it of a truth*: And if any would *know* what *this* Church is *called*, the *name* of it is, THE LORD IS THERE. And so the whole *guiding* and *ordering* of this Church, depends wholly on *God*, who dwels *within* it. For *God* will not *dwell* in his *own* Church, and sit *still*, whilst *others* that are *without* it, shall *govern* it; but the *government* of the *right* Church, lies on *his shoulders*, who is *Immanuel*, God *with* us, and *in* us. And so *this* government of the *Church*, is one of the *invisible* things of *God*, in the Church: *Christ* who fils it, *governing* it, by a most *present* and *powerful*, but *invisible influence*; leading it into *truth*, by the Spirit of *truth*; into *patience*, by the Spirit of *patience*; into *love*, by the Spirit of *love*; into *power*, by the Spirit of *power*; into *humility*, *meekness*, *patience*, *heavenly mindedness*, and into the *fulness* of all *Righteousness*, by that Spirit, which *contains* all these *graces* in it self, and *works* them in all *those*, in whom it *dwels*. In this *government* we *hear the voice behind us*, *saying*, *This is the way, walk in it, when we turn either to the right hand, or to the left.* In this *government* we have not *outward laws* to *order* us, as the *Kingdoms* of the *world* have, but an *inward law written* in our *hearts* by the *Spirit* of God, as God hath said, *I will write my law in their hearts, and in their inward parts*; and this *law*, is the *word of life*; for the *living* Church or *body* of Christ, can only be *governed* by a *living word*, which is called, the *law of the spirit of life*.

And according to this *Government* also, *God* guides the true Church *wonderfully*, the *soul* not seeing the *ways* and *councels* of God, whereby he *forms* and *fashions* the Church, according to his own *minde*, and *good pleasure*, clean *contrary* to humane *reason* and *judgement*; for he brings them to *mourning*, to bring them to *comfort*; brings them to *despair*, to bring them to *faith*; to *death*, to bring them to *life*; yea, even to *hell*, to bring them to *heaven*: leading his *chosen people* after such a *manner*, that *nothing* would follow but *faith*, which *looks* not at the *things* which are *seen*, but at the *things* which are *not* seen. And thus, when the *soul* is in the midst of many *fears*, *woes*, *agonies*, *temptations*, till it feel in good *earnest*, the true *sorrows* of *death*, and *pains* of *hell*, and in this *darkness* sees no *beam*, nor the least *glimmering* of *light*;

light; and wants all *counsel*, and *knows* not which *way* to turn *itself*: then *Christ* comes and *manifests* himself to the *soul*, and *counsels*, and *directs*, and *comforts* it, and *leads* it into the *path* of *life*, and *redeems* it from all distress, subduing the *world*, and the *devil*, and *sin*, and *death*, and *hell* under it; yea, and *carrying* it into all the *fulness* of *God*.

The Church never wanted this two-fold Government of God in any Age.

Now these *two* sorts of *Governments*, to wit, the one of his *special providence*, and the other of his *spiritual presence*, the *true* Church never *wanted* in *any* Age: And in this *present* Age, when the *Prelatical Government* hath been *dissolved* for *several* years together; Can any *Christian* think, that the *right* Church of *Christ* hath been without *all Government*? *Nay*, all this *while* it hath been *governed* most *powerfully* by his *special* providence, and most *sweetly* by his *spiritual* presence: So that neither the *world*, nor the *devil* have been able to *prevail*, neither against its *grace* nor *comforts*: And for an *outward*, *formal*, *visible*, *enforced* Government, after the manner of *civil* Corporations, or *worldly* Kingdoms; the *true* Church can as well want *such* a *Government* at *all* times, as at *any* time; yea, and it is *best* without it, as being *farthest* removed from the tyranny of *men*, and more *immediately* under the Government of Christ, its onely *King* and *Law-Giver*.

It were to be wished, that they that are so busie about outward orders in the Church, were themselves acquainted with inward temptations.

And therefore *they* that are so *violent* for an *outward* and *visible* Government of the *Church*, after the *manner* of the *Kingdoms* of the *World*; I do *heartily wish*, that if it be the *good pleasure* of God, they might *sometime* or *other* be exercised with *temptations* of *despair*, and with the *fence* of the *wrath* of *God*, and *everlasting burnings*: For by this means their *idle* and *vain* thoughts and speculations of *governing* the *Church* of *God* by *humane power* and *methods*, would soon *vanish*, and they would *soon* give over to trouble *themselves*, and the *faithful*, about things that have neither *power* in them to *free* from *eternal death*, nor to *procure* eternal *life*.

The mediate Government of the Church is Christs, and not Mans.

And thus much for that *two-fold* Government of the *Church*, which *God* himself exercises immediately in and over it; where-of we *must* not be *ignorant*, if we *desire* to preserve the *peace* of the Church, both in our *selves* and *others*.

Now besides this *immediate Government* of *God*, there is *another* sort of *Government* of the *Church*, *which Christ* exercises *medi-*

mediately by the *Church*: And *this* also is *Christs* Government, and not *mans*; and *men* who have not *known* nor *understood* the former Government of *Christ*, have *mistaken* this also, through the same *unbelief*; wherefore, they not so much as minding the former *Government* of Christ, which is *immediate*, and by *himself*, have made this *mediate* Government of the *Church* by *man*, to be *all*; And *this* also, I say, they have understood most grossly and carnally, and not according to the *Word*, but according to their own *ignorant* and *seduced hearts*. I shall not *trouble* the *Reader* with their *particular misapprehensions* in this matter; seeing it is far more *profitable* to *content* our selves with the plain and evident *truth*, then to *enquire* after variety of *errors*. Wherefore letting alone their *darkness*, I shall onely *endeavour* that the *light* of the *Word* may *shine* unto us in this *matter*, that *herein* also we may be *taught of God*, if it be the *will of God*.

This *mediate* Government then of *Christ*, in the *true* Church, I *conceive* to be nothing but this, *Christs ordering all things by the faithful, among the faithful, in reference to the communion of Saints*. What the mediate Government of the Church is.

Now because many *Christians* desire *instruction* and *light* in this *matter*, I shall be *willing* to hold forth to *them* that *measure* of *knowledge*, which I have received *herein*; being *desirous* also to learn *my self* of them that can *teach* me *better* by the *Word*. And that I may proceed the more *distinctly*, I shall propound *several things*, to which I shall speak in *order*; and they be these:

The particulars contained in this mediate Government.

1. To *whom* Christ hath committed, the *power* of *ordering* and *managing* all things in the *true Church*, in reference to the *communion* of *Saints*.
2. What *kinde* of *power* this is which the *true* Church *hath*.
3. What is the *extent* of *this power*.
4. What is the *outward instrument* of it.
5. What the *true* Church can *do*, by vertue of it. And *this* comprehends these *particulars*.

1. It can *gather it self together*.
2. It can *appoint its own order*.
3. It can *choose its own officers*; and if need be, *reform* them, or *depose* them.

4. It can *call its own councels.*

5. It can *judge of all Doctrines*, both of its *Officers* and *Councels.*

And *all* these things I reckon *needful* for the *true* Church to *know*, for the *preserving* among *themselves* that *peace* and *unity* they have in *Christ.*

They *first* thing then is,

1. *To whom Christ hath committed the power of ordering and managing all things in the true Church*, in reference *to the communion of Saints.*

Church-power given to the whole Church alike.

I *Answer*; He hath given it to the *true* Church *it self*, as *formerly described*, even to *each* and *all* the *members* of it: for as *natural power* belongs to all *natural men* alike, so *spiritual power* (which is the *true Church-power*) to all *spiritual men* alike. *Christ* in a *Believer* is the *root* of *true Church-power*; and because Christ dwels in *all* Believers *alike*, through *unity of faith*: therefore *all* Believers *partake* alike of *spiritual* and *super-natural power*; and no *one* partakes of *this power* more then *another*, any more, then he partakes of *Christ*, more then *another*; but *Christ* in them all, is the *self-same* power of *God*, to do *all* things that are to be *done* in the *Kingdom* of *God.*

Math. 16. 19. explained.

And according this *sense*, that place in *Math.* 16. 19. is to be *understood*; where *Christ* saith to *Peter*, *And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven*; *and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven*; *and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* The *Pope* and *Papal* Church, under *colour* of this place, have made great *merchandise*, and have exceedingly *abused*, and *cheated* the *Nations*, for many *hundred* years together; but the *light* of the *Gospel* hath shined forth, and the days of their *traffique* are at *end*: And yet *since*, others have been *trucking* with the world, by their *false interpretations* of this place, and have *thought* to use it, to their great *advantage*; but the *day* hath so far *dawned*, that their *shadows* also, are *flying* away.

But not to keep you *longer*, from the *Words* themselves; *Peter* had said to Christ, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*: And *Christ* replyed to *Peter*, *Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is heaven*; and then adds, *Unto thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of heaven*

heaven, &c. that is, not to *Peter* as an *Apostle*, or *Minister*, but as a *Believer*, who had the *Revelation of the Father*, touching the *Son*: and so *also*, they are given *equally*, to each *faithful Christian*, who hath the same *Revelation* with *Peter*, as also to the whole communion of *Saints*. And so, these *Keys* are not given to any particular *person* or *persons*, consisting of *flesh* and *blood*, or *imployed* in such or such an *Office*; but *that* man, whoever he be, that hath the *Revelation* of the *Father*, *he* it is, to whom these *Keys* are given, and to *none* else: and so they are given to *each* Believer in particular, and to the *whole* Church of Believers, in *general*.

The Keys given to all that have the revelation of the Father.

But *what* are these *Keys*, about *Which*, there hath been so great *a do* in the *Church*?

Quest.

I *answer*, They are not any outward *Ecclesiastical power* whatever, that *men* have devised, to serve their own *turns* withal; but to pass by the many *false conceits*, wherewith many *former* and *present* Writers, *have* and *do* still *trouble* the Church; *John* doth tell us plainly, *Joh.* 20. 22. what *Matthew* means by the *Keys of the Church*. Christ (saith he) appearing to his Disciples after his *Resurrection*, breathing on them, said, *Receive the holy Spirit* [here are the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven] and then adds, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained*; that is, when ye have received the *Spirit*, then you have received the *Keys*, to *binde* and *loose*, to *remit* and *retain* sin, and that not according to *your* wils, but wholly according to the *minde*, and *will*, and *direction* of the *Spirit*. And so, Christ *then* before his *ascention*, gave these *Keys*, truly to his Disciples, but more *solemnly* and *fully* at the day of *Pentecost*; when the *Spirit* was given by *Christ glorified*: and *after*, the *Gentiles*, who by the preaching of *Peter* received the *Spirit*, even as the *Apostles* did, they also received these *Keys*; and so *all*, that have received the *Spirit*, have the *Keys* of the Kingdom *equally* committed to them, and the *power* of *binding* and *loosing* by the *ministration* of the *Spirit*. And so these *Keys*, appertain not only to *greater Congregations* of Christians, but to the very least *communion* of Saints, as *Christ* hath promised, *Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I present in the midst of them*: Where we see, that *two* or *three*, gathered together in *Christs* name have as *much* power, as *Peter*, and *all* the Apostles; because *Christ*, is

Answ. What the Keyes are.

equally present with *these*, as with *those*. Again, *Christ* hath commanded, that if the *offending* brother will not hear the *admonition* of *two* or *three* other *brethren*, the *offended* brother should tell the *Church*, Mat 18.17. Now the Church, is not the *Officers*, but the *Congregation* of the faithful, seeing *men* are not of the Church through any *Office*, but only through *faith*. And by *all* these things it is *evident*, That the *power* of *Church-government*, that is, the *power* of *acting* and *ordering* all things, among the *faithful*, belongs to every faithful man alike, in the *Congregation* of the *faithful*.

The true power of the true Church, is a spiritual and heavenly power.

2. What *kinde of power* this is, which the true *Church* hath.

I answer in *general*, that it is a power *sutable* to the *Church* or *Kingdom*, whereof it is the power: now as the *Church* we speak of, is *that* Church, which is *born* of God, and of the *Spirit*, and so is not at *all* of this world; so the *power*, that is *agreeable* to this Church is the *power* of God, and his *Spirit*, and not at *all* of this *world*; that is, it is not any *civil* or *secular* power; I may add, nor any *Ecclesiastical* power (according to the *common understanding* it) that hath any *place* in the *true* Church, but *meerly* a *spiritual* and *heavenly* power, without any *conjunction* or *mixture* of the *other*; seeing Christs power is *perfect*, and every way *sufficient* for his own Kingdom, and *Christs* Kingdom is *Gods* Kingdom, as well as the *Fathers*: and so men may *as well* carry *worldly* and *secular* power, into the *Fathers* Kingdom, as into the *Sons*, seeing *this*, is no *other* then the Kingdom of *God*, though it be among *men*, and no other then the Kingdom of *Heaven*, though it be upon *earth*; which hath not been *understood* nor *considered* by them, who have been so *busie* to bring *secular* power into a *spiritual* Kingdom, as if Christs own *power*, in his own *Kingdom*, were either *weak* or *imperfect*.

More particularly, this *true* power, of the *true* Church, is (as I said) *Christs* power in the *faithful*, which is, the *self-same* with *Christs* power in *himself*; and so,

1. It is not a *power* of *violence*, but a *power* of *influence*, even such a *power* as the *Head* hath over the *members*, and the *soul* over the *body*; it is not a *coercive*, but a *perswasive* power, a power that makes men *willing* that are *not willing*, and doth not *force* the *unwilling*, against their *wils*.

2. This

2. This *power* is *humble*, and not *proud*, as *worldly* power is; for the *power* of the *world*, sets men *over* others, but the *power* of the *Church*, sets men *under* others; *I* (saith Christ of himself) *am among you as one that serves*: and again, *He that will be the chief among you, let him be the servant of all.*

3. This *power*, is for *edification*, and not for *destruction*; as *Paul* acknowledges, *again* and *again*, that the *power* the Lord gave him, was *this*, and no *other* power, *viz.* not to *cast* men out of their *native* Kingdoms, but to *translate* them into *Gods* Kingdom; not to *take* away their outward *Liberties* or *Estates*, but to *bring* them into the *Liberty* and *Inheritance* of the *Saints*; to bring men to *eternal life*, and not to *destroy* men, by *temporal death.* 2 Cor. 10. 8, —— 13. 10

4. This *power*, seeks the *good* of *others*, more then its *own*, yea good of *others*, with the *neglect* of its *own*: So *Moses* was not *busie*, to have a most *rebellious* people, *blotted out* of the Book of *life*, but rather *desired*, his *own* name might be *blotted out* of that book, that (if it had been the *will* of God) *theirs* might have been *written in.* And *Paul* desired that *himself* might be *separated* from Christ, that his *brethren* and *kinsmen* after the flesh, might have been *united* to *him.* And if this *power* seek the *good of others* after this *high rate*, even to the *neglecting*, as it were, and *laying aside* their own *eternal good*, how much more to the *neglecting* and *laying aside* their *temporal* good, their worldly *profits*, *advantages* and dignities?

5. This *power*, doth not make *others* suffer, to *enlarge* the Church, but suffers *it self*, to bring this about; So *Christ*, as *Wickliff* saith, through his *poverty*, *humility* and *suffering injury* and *death*, got unto *him*, the *children* of his *Kingdom*, and not by *force*; and the *Martyrs* enlarged the *Church* of Christ by *dying* themselves, and not by *causing* others to die; the *blood* of the *Martyrs*, being the *seed* of the *Church.*

6. This *power*, only *acts* to a spiritual *end*, *salvation*, and only according to spiritual *Laws*; but not, to any *temporal* and *worldly* ends, according to *civil* and *humane* laws.

And thus you *see*, that this *true* Church power, for the *nature*

and *quality* of it, both in *general*, and in *particular*, differs very much, both from the *apprehensions* and *practise* of the most of our *Ecclesiastical* men.

3. What is the *extent* of this *true* Church *power*?

Christs power extends it self to the whole Church, but no further.

I answer; that this *power* extends it self full as *far* as the *Church*, but no *further*: For what hath the *Church* to *do*, with *those* that are not *of* the *Church*? *What have We to do* (saith *Paul*) *with them that are without*? For *Church power*, which is *spiritual*, is no more *sutable* to the *World*, then *worldly power*, which is *fleshly*, is *sutable* to the *Church*. The *power* of the *Church*, which is *Christs* power, onely reaches so *far* as *Christs* Kingdom; that is, the *people* that are *born* of *God*, and his *Spirit*. True, *Church Government* reaches as *far* as *Christs* and the *Spirits effectuall influence* and *operation*, but no *further*; that is, to *all* that are *willing*, but to *none* that are *unwilling*. As *nothing* hath more *troubled* the Church, then to *govern* it, and give it *Laws* after the *manner* of the *world*, by seculat *force* and *power*; so nothing hath more *troubled* the *world*, then to *govern* it, and give it *Laws*, after the *manner* of the *Church*, by the aforesaid *compulsion*. Wherefore as the *Government* of the *World* is not to be *spread* over the *Church*; so neither is the *Government* of the *Church* to be *spread* over the *World*: but as the *World* and the *Church* are *distinct* things, in *themselves*, so they are to be *contented* with their *distinct* Governments.

4. What *is* the *outward instrument* of this power?

The word the only outward instrument of Church power.

I answer, The *Word only*, which is the only *scepter* and *sword* of *Christs* Kingdom, to *govern* his *people*, and *subdue* his *enemies*. *Christ* himself the *Head* of the Church, used no other *instrument* to govern *his* people by, but the *word* or the *preaching* the *Gospel* of the Kingdom, and *declaring* what he had *heard* from his *Father*; and at his *departure* out of the *world*, he told them, That *as his Father had sent him*, *so did he send them*, and no *otherwise*; that is, to do *all* in the *Church* by the *power* of the *Word*, and *nothing* by the *power* of the *world*. And so, the true *Church* doth all in it self only by the *Gospel*; by the *Gospel* it *bindeth* and *looseth*; by the *Gospel*, it *remits* and *retains* sin; by the *Gospel*, it

quickens

quickens to *life*, and *wounds* to *death*; by the *Gospel*, it *receives* in, and *casts* out; by the *Gospel*, it works *faith*, renues the *life*, *acts*, *orders*, *guides* and *governs* all things; and *that* Church that hath *another scepter* and *sword* besides the *word*, that hath *orders*, and *constitutions* of *men*, to govern by, and *plurality* of *votes* in *Classical*, *Provincial* and *National* Assemblies to *binde* and *loose* by; that have their own *Laws* and *Orders* to be their *Scepter*, and the *Authority* of the *Magistrate* to be their *Sword* in their *Kingdom*; I say, if *these* be the *ways* and *instruments* of their *Governments*, assuredly the *Church* they *boast* of, is *another* Church then *Christs*, and is *no other* in very *deed*, but a *Kingdom* of *sin* and *darkness*, and *death*; and when its *form* of *godliness*, which it hath put on to *deceive*, shall after a *few* years *vanish* away, it shall *return* into the *shape* of its first *beginning*.

And therefore let us *know*, whatever *rules*, *orders*, or humane *inventions*, men do *study* and *devise* to govern their Churches by, the *true* Church of *Christ* shall ever be *known* by the *scepter* and *sword* of the *onely Gospel* preached in it, which is fully *sufficient* for the *regiment* of the Church; else *Christ* were an *imperfect* Lawgiver: And all those that do affirm, that the *votes*, *determinations*, *rules* and *constitutions* of *Councels*, are better for the well *ordering* and *governing* the Church, then the *pure* and *naked word* of the *Gospel*, by the *ministration* of the *Spirit*, in my judgement they speak *blasphemously*.

Let us now hear what *Luther* saith to this purpose; *Christians* (saith he) ought to be governed by that *word*, and no *other*, whereby they are made *Christians*, that is, *free* from *sin*; and this is, only by the pure *Gospel* of *God*, without the *addition* of *Councels*, *Doctors*, *Fathers*. For what is it to *govern* Christians by *that* word, which though they *keep*, yet neither do they *become* Christians, nor *continue* such? nay, they *cease* to be Christians, and *lose* Christ. And of *this* sort is *every* word besides the *Gospel*: and *salvation* reigns in us, not by the *laws* of *men*, but by the *power* of *Christ*. Farther, they that are not *Christians*, are to be restrained other *ways*, then by the *traditions* of *men*; for these are to be *let alone*; and as *Paul* saith, We are not to *mingle* with them. There is the *secular* sword, there is the *Magistrate* for these, and it belongs to *him* to restrain those that are *evil*, from *evil deeds*, by the *power* of the *sword*. But the *Bishop*, or *Overseer*,

Christiani eo verbo, & non alio regi debent, quo Christiani, id est, liberi à peccatis fiunt; hoc est, solo Evangelio Dei puro, sine additionibus Conciliorum, Doctorum, Patrum, &c. Luther. Epist. ad Carol. Ducem Subaudiæ, tom. 7. f. 483.

Overseer, governs *Christians* without the *sword*, only by the *Word* of *God*; seeing it is *certain*, they are not *Christians*, except they be *spontaneously* good; and *such* they are made by the *force* of the *spirit* of *faith*; as *Paul* saith, *Rom.* 8. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God.* What *madness* then is it to *urge* them that are *willingly* good, with the *Laws* of the *evil?* And yet, saith he, There are not a *few* light and vain men, that think that the *business* of the *Gospel*, is to be *promoted* with *weapons* and *cuffes*.

Quæ ergo insania est, spontanee bonos urgere legibus malorum? Sunt non parum multi, leves & futiles homunciones, putantes rem Evangelicam gladio & pugnis esse promovendam. Ibid. *Reputate animo, quo gladio ipse Papatum, &c.*

And the same *Luther*, in his Epistle to the *Christians*, and Preachers of *Erphurd*, saith, Consider in your minde, with what *sword*, I subdued the *Papacy*, and the whole *state* of *religious* men, who before were *dreadful* to all: of whom it was said, *Who shall fight with the Beast, that hath power to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them?* And yet (saith he) I never *touched* them with so much as *one* of my *fingers*; but Christ destroyed and overthrew all that *detestable* Kingdom, by discovering their iniquities, by the *Spirit* of his *mouth*, that is, by the *Word* of the *Gospel*.

In which *passages* of his (besides what is spoken before) it is apparent, that there is no other *instrument* of the *true* Churches power, but the *word* of the *Gospel*, which is the only *sceptre* and *sword* of *Christs Kingdom*.

What the Church can do through the power it hath received from Christ.

5. What the *true* Church can *do* by vertue of this *power*.

Now the *true* Church by the power it hath received from *Christ*, can,

1 It can convene and meet together, as often as it pleaseth.

1. *Gather it self together*, *when*, and as *often* as it *pleaseth*. The *company* of *Believers* have *power* to *gather* themselves *together* for their mutual *good*, *instruction*, *preservation*, *edification*, and for the *avoiding* or *preventing* of evil, and that *without* the *consent* or *authority* of any *extrinsecal* and *forraign* power whatever; else *Christ* were not a *sufficient* founder of his *Church*.

And if every *free Society*, not subjected to *tyranny*, hath *power* in *it self* to *congregate* and come together, as *conveniency* and *necessity* shall require; as is evident in all civil *Corporations*, and in all *Fraternities* and meetings of *love*; much more hath the

Church

Church of *Christ*, which is the *freest* Society in the *world*, power to meet together into a communion of *Saints*, though it be without and against the *consent* and *authority*, of the *powers* of the *world*.

And thus the *Disciples*, immediately after Christs resurrection, though the *People* and *Rulers* were wholly *set* against them, did often *meet together* among themselves, though *privately*, and Christ himself came and stood in the *midst* of them, and finding them in that way of *Communion*, said, *Peace be unto them*: And so by his *own* presence did both *justifie* and *encourage* such meetings. And after, the *Apostles*, with other *Believers*, to the number of an *hundred* and *twenty*, met together in an upper room, to *pray*, and to *choose* an *Apostle* in the stead of *Judas*, *Act.* 1. And at the day of *Pentecost* they all *met* again, *Act.* 2. Though the *Elders* of the *Church*, and *Rulers* of the *state*, were utterly against their meetings. And again, *Act.* 4. *Peter* and *John*, after the *threatnings* of the *Rulers* and the *Jews*, went and met with their *own company*, which was now *mightily* encreased by the Ministery of the *Gospel*, and declared to them all things that *God* had done *by* them, and the *Rulers* had done *against* them; whereupon *all* of them joyned together in the *praise* of *God*, for the *success* of the Gospel, against the *power* of the *world*. And again, *Act.* 6. the Church of its *own accord* met together to chuse seven *Deacons*; And a multitude of other *instances*, might be produced. By all which it appears, that the *Church* of *Believers* hath power of it *self* to appoint its own *meetings*, as *conveniency* or *necessity* shall require for the *good* of the Church. And therefore none are to *presume* to deny the *Church*, this *power* which it hath received from *him*, that hath *all power in heaven and in earth*: Neither ought the *true Church* to suffer *this* power to be taken from them, which they have *received* from so *good* a hand; but still to use their own *Christian* meetings, though the *Powers* of the world never so much *oppose* them, as the *Apostles* and *Believers* in *their* time began, and as *Believers after*, for 300 years *continued*, notwithstanding the *barbarous cruelties* of the persecuting *Emperours*.

2. As the *Church* of the *faithful*, hath power from *Christ* to *meet together*; so, secondly, to *appoint its own outward orders*: For the *Church* whilst it dwels in *flesh* and *blood*, uses some *external Rites*, by which it is neither *sanctified* in *soul* or *body*; but

2. It can appoint its own orders.

they are things meerly of outward *Order* and *decency*: And *these* things each *Church* or *Communion* of *Saints* may order by *it self*, according to the *wisedom* of the *Spirit*; so it *observe* these *Rules*.

Rules to be observed in the Churches appointing its Orders.

1. *That they do all things in love*, seeing all *Laws* without *love* are *tyranny*; and so whatsoever is not *from*, and *for* love, is not to be *appointed*; and if it be, it is again to be *abolished*; seeing no *Text* of the *Scripture* it self, if it *build* not up *love*, is *rightly* interpreted.

2. *They are to do all things for peace*, and all outward *Orders* in the *Church*, must be to *procure*, and to *preserve* Peace among the faithful, and not to *break* it. They are most *unhappy* and *pernicious* Orders, that do not only offend a *few* of Christs *little ones*, (which it self is a sad thing) but do *grieve*, *disquiet* and *prejudice* the peace of the *generality* of the *faithful*.

Nunquid Ecclesia per mundum gubernanda est, & non potius contra morem mundi, eo quod scriptum est, nolite conformari huic seculo? Jo. Gerf. Decl. Viror. Ecclesiast.

3. *They must do all things after the wisdom of the Spirit, and not after the manner of the world*: seeing the *Church* is not to be *ordered* according to the *manner* of the *world*, but rather *against* it; as the *Apostle* saith, *Be not conformed to this World*.

4. *They must appoint nothing as of necessity*; For there is no more *pestilent* doctrine in the *Church*, then to make those things *necessary*, which are *not* necessary: For thus the *liberty* of *faith* is extinguished, and the *consciences* of men are *ensnared*. We doubt not but Believers may *order* any *outward* things for their own *good*, so *they* do not impose them *necessarily* on any; as if the *observing* of them were *righteousness*, and the *omission* of them *sin*. And so the *Church* after all its *Orders*, it is to leave *indifferent* things as it *found* them; that is, *free*, and at the *liberty* of the *faithful*, to *observe*, or *not* observe, as they shall see *cause*, or judge *convenient*. For all these kinde of things are *indifferent* in their own *nature*; and *God* regards no more the *manner*, and *form*, and *time*, and *circumstances* of spiritual *duties*, then the manner, and form, &c. of our *eating*, and *drinking*, and *working*, and *marrying*, and *trading*; for *all* which, it is *sufficient*, if they be done in *Christian wisdom* and *discretion*, without

without being tied *necessarily*, to a *set* and *unchangeable* form.

5. They may *perswade* their Orders (if they see cause) by the *spirit* of *love* and *meekness*, but *must* not *enforce* them, upon pain of *secular punishment*, or *Church censure*; as those use to do, that make themselves *Lords* and *Tyrants* in the Church. For these *outward* things the *Church* can order, onely for the *willing*, but not for the *unwilling*. And so, if *some* Believers shall think good, upon *just* grounds, to do *otherwise* in these *outward* things, then the *generality* of the *Church*, yet ought the *Church* to be so far from *censuring* them, that it is to entertain *Communion* with them, notwithstanding any such *differences*. For when *Christians* are knit to *Christ*, by *faith*, and do receive and walk in his *Spirit*, all *other* things are *indifferent* to them, to *do*, or *not* to do; to *use*, or *not* to use, at their own *freedom*. And *Christ* onely being *sufficient* for all *his*; whatever is *besides* Christ, is a *perishing* thing; and so is so *far* from being to be *imposed*, that in *it self* it is not to be *valued*.

Now if the *Church* do appoint any *outward Orders*, these rules it is to *observe*; yea, the *spiritual* Church doth *always* observe them, and never made *rules* in it self, upon other *terms*, then are here set down.

But on the *contrary*, the *carnal* Church, or Churches of *men*, they especially *trouble* themselves about these *outward things*; and of *these* they make *Laws*, and *Constitutions*, yea, *sin* and *righteousness*; and by these things they *judge* the *Church*, and the *members* of Christ: In such sort, that they that will *submit* to their *Rules* and *impositions*, shall be the *Church* of *Christ*; but they that *will* not, shall be reckoned *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*. And hereby they *declare*, that they are fallen from the *power* of godliness, to the *form*, and from the *substance* of Religion, to the *circumstances*; inasmuch as they advance *empty forms* and *shadows*, in the place of *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy* in the holy Spirit. And to *these* we may say, with *Peter*, *Why tempt ye God, in putting such a yoak upon the Disciples and Members of Christ?*

The carnal Church minds outward Orders more then the power of godliness.

And though this *kinde* of *Church*, will with these things still be *troubling* us, and *biting* us by the *heel*, yet in the power and pre-

rogative of the *ſeed* of the *Woman*, we will, by degrees, *bruiſe* its *head*, till at laſt we *break* it quite in *pieces*.

Now *one* thing more I ſhall *adde*, touching the *Churches power* to appoint its *own Orders*, as conceiving it very *neceſſary* to be *known*; and that is this:

The Church is to appoint Orders for its Officers, and not its Officers for it.

That the *true* Church hath *power* to appoint theſe *outward Orders*, not for it ſelf onely, but alſo for its *Officers* (which alſo are *part* of it ſelf) and it is not to *ſuffer* its *Officers* to *frame* or *impoſe* ſuch on *it*. For the *Church* is not the *Officers*, but the *Officers* are the *Churches*; as *Paul* hath *taught* us, ſaying to the *Church*, *All things are yours*, *whether* Paul, or Apollos, *or* Cephas. And ſo the *Officers* are the *Churches*, and are to be *ordered* by *it*, in theſe things, but are not to *order* it. And if the *Officers* of the Church, *forgetting* that they are *ſervants*, ſhall *preſume* by themſelves to *order* outward things *for* the *Church*, *without* the *Church*, as *now* is done; the *Church* ſtill remains *above* the *Officers*, and hath *power* to *interpret*, *change*, or wholly *take away* all thoſe things, as it ſees *occaſion*: to wit, ſo *far* as they are a *ſtumbling block* to the *weak*, and a *grief* to the *ſtrong*, and tend to work *diviſion* among the *faithful*. *Preſumptuous* Officers are *they*, and know not where *Chriſt* hath *ſet* them, who inſtead of being *ordered* by the *Church*, go about to *order* it, and make themſelves the *Lords* of the *Church*, being but the *ſervants* of it.

3. *The true Church hath power to chuſe its Officers, and if there be cauſe, to reform them, or depoſe them.*

3. To chuſe its Officers.

The *Church* hath power to *chuſe its own Officers*. True indeed it is, that as in the *natural*, ſo in the *ſpiritual* body, *every* member is in *office*; and that the *Miniſtry* of the *New Teſtament*, being the *Miniſtration of the Spirit*, is *common* to all that have *received* the *Spirit*. Wherefore, if every Believer, hath received the *Spirit* to *profit withall*, and hath *power* and *priviledge*, as *opportunity* ſerves, and *neceſſity* requires, to *ſpeak the word*, that the *power* and *vertue* of *Chriſt* may be *declared* through them *all*: there is no doubt, but any *Community* of *Chriſtians* may, by a *common conſent*, chuſe *one* or *mo*, to *ſpeak* to all, in the *name* of all. *Agreeable* to this is that of *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. where he commands, *That the office of teaching be committed to faithful men, who are able*

able to teach others. Where the *Apostle*, contemning all *superfluous ceremonies* and *pomp* of *ordaining*, onely seeks, that the Ministers may be *fit* and *able* to teach, and without any more *ado*, commits the *Ministry* of the *word* unto them.

More particularly in this matter we shall enquire after these three things.

1. *What Officers* are to be chosen?
2. *Out of whom* they are to be chosen? And,
3. *By whom* they are to be chosen?

What Officers the Church is to chuse?

For the first, What *Officers are to be chosen? Paul* teaches us *this*, saying, *They must be faithful men, apt and able to teach others.* For as among *natural* men in the world, they that have *most* natural *power* and *abilities*, are *fittest* to be the *Officers:* so among *spiritual* men in the *Church*, they are *fittest* to be the *Officers*, that have most *spiritual* power, that is, such in whom *Christ* and the *Spirit* are most *manifest*; and of this, the *faithful* of all *sorts* are *Judges*. Wherefore no *natural* parts and abilities; nor no *humane* learning, and degrees in the *Schools*, or *Universities*; nor no *Ecclesiastical Ordination*, or *Orders*, are to be reckoned *sufficient* to make any man a *Minister*, but only the *teaching* of *God*, and *gifts* received of *Christ*, by the *Spirit*, for the *work* of the *Ministry*, which the *faithful* are able to *discern* and *judge* of.

2 *Out of whom these Officers are to be chosen?* And that is, out of the *flock of Christ*, and nowhere else. Indeed *Antichrist* bringing in *humane learning*, instead of *the Spirit*, chose his *Ministers* onely out of the *Universities:* but the *right* Church chuses them out of the *faithful*; seeing *it* reckons no man *learned*, and so *fit* to speak in the *Church*, but he that hath *heard and learned from the Father*. Moreover it is plain, that as *natural power* is founded on a *natural gift*, and he must needs be a *man*, that is capable of *humane power*; so *supernatural power* is founded on a *supernatural gift*, and he must needs be a *Believer*, that is capable of this *spiritual power:* And so a man must *needs* first *be* of the *Church*, ere he can have any power or *office* in it. Wherefore all *unbelievers* and *carnal* men are so far from having any *power* in the true Church, that they have no *place* in it; and are so far from being *Officers*, that they are not *members*: For they that

neither have, nor know *ſpiritual* power *themſelves*, how can they *exerciſe* it among *others*?

3. Who chuſes them.

3. *By whom they are to be choſen?* And that is, by the *Congregation*, or *Community* of Believers: For if every *free Society* hath power to chuſe its own *Officers*, much more hath the *true* Church this power; being (as is ſaid) the *freeſt Society* under heaven. And ſo the *true* Church is not to have *Officers* thruſt over them by *others*, but is to *chuſe* them its ſelf.

Object. If any *object* againſt this, that *Paul* commanded *Timothy* and *Titus* to appoint *Elders*; and that *Paul* and *Barnabas*, *Act.* 14. 23. *did chuſe Elders in every Church with prayer and faſting.* And therefore it may ſeem, that the *Congregation* hath *not* power to *chuſe* its own *Miniſters*, but that ſome *chief Miniſters* muſt appoint other *Miniſters* in each *Congregation.*

Anſw. To this I anſwer: That if there were any *Miniſters* among *us*, that did hold the place of the *Apoſtles*, living and acting evidently in the *vertues* of *Chriſt*, and in the *knowledge* and *power* of the *Spirit*, I would not *doubt* to allow them as much *authority*, in ordaining Miniſters, as *Paul* and *Barnabas*, or any of the other *Apoſtles* had: But ſince it is very *evident*, that very *few* of theſe have the Spirit *of the LORD upon them*: how ſhould they have Authority to *appoint* Miniſters, who cannot *themſelves* be reckoned Believers, or ſpiritual?

But ſecondly, If *they* were true Miniſters, through the *anointing* of the Spirit, yet could they not *appoint* Miniſters in other Congregations, without their *own conſent* and approbation, but thoſe whom the *whole* Church *chuſes*, they are to *commend* to God by prayer; and if they ſhould *refuſe* to do this, yet *he* who is *choſen* by the Church, is *ſufficiently* its *Miniſter*, through the Churches *choice* alone. Neither did *Paul*, or *Barnabas*, or *Timothy* or *Titus*, appoint any *Miniſter*, by their own *ſingle Authority*, without the *conſent* of the *Church*; as may appear by thoſe *Scriptures*, 1 *Tim.* 3. and *Titus* 1. where *Paul* ſaith, *The Overſeers, or Elders, as alſo the Deacons, or Miniſters, ſhould be blameleſs and unreproveable.* Now neither *Timothy*, nor *Titus*, knew of *themſelves* who were *blameleſs* in thoſe places, but onely received the *Teſtimony* of the *Church*, which *choſe* them to that *office.*

Further we ſee, *Act.* 6. that the *Twelve Apoſtles* together, did not, by themſelves, appoint any to a *lower office*, to wit, to be *Deacons.*

Deacons, without the Churches *own choice* of them: But say the *Twelve* to the *multitude* of the Disciples, *Look ye out among your selves seven men of honest report, full of the holy Spirit, and wisedom, whom we may appoint over this business.* And those whom the *Church* chose, the *Apostles* confirmed. Wherefore if it were not *lawful* for the *Apostles*, at their own *pleasure*, to *appoint* men to *minister* so much as *alms* to the necessities of the *poor*, without the *choice* and *consent* of the *Church*; much *less* was it *lawful* for them to appoint any, among *Believers*, to the hard and difficult *work* of the *Ministry*, without their own *choice* and *approbation*. By all which it is *clear*, that the *Congregations* of the *faithful* have power in *themselves*, according to the doctrine of the *Gospel*, to *chuse their own Ministers*.

And therefore seeing the *true* Church of *God* cannot possibly be *without the Word*, seeing it is *born*, and *nourished*, and *encreased*, and *strengthened*, and *preserved*, and *comforted*, and *perfected* by it: And seeing the *generality* of the *Clergy* of these times, are *ignorant* of the *mystery* of the Gospel, and *destitute* of the *Spirit*; it must come to pass, that either the *Church* must *perish* for want of the *Word*, or else (according to what we have heard) *Believers* must *meet together*, as they can *conveniently*, up and down the *Kingdom*; and such Meetings must *chuse* one or mo *fit* persons, from among *themselves*, to be their *Elders* in the *Lord*, and then by *prayer* to *commend* them to the *Work* of the *Ministry*, and so to *acknowledge* them for their *Pastors*. And there is no doubt, but what *Believers* met together in the *name* of *Christ*, do in this *matter*, it is done through the *working* and *approving* of *God* himself. And besides *this* way, I see no *other*, how (in this great *defection* of the *Clergy*) the *Church* may have the *true word* of God *restored* to their *meetings* and *assemblies* again. Now *this* thing that is so directly *cross* to the *way* and *working* of *Antichrist*, for many *Ages* together, and is so opposite to *Fathers*, *Schoolmen*, *Councels*, *Doctors*, *Antiquity*, *Customs*, and the *general practice* of the *Kingdom*, cannot be hoped to be *accomplished* at *once*, but by *degrees*, as the *lightnings* of the *Gospel* shall enlighten the *World*, and the *Spirit* shall be *poured* forth. And therefore in this *matter*, let some *begin*, and the rest *follow*, as this *practice* shall be *cleared* up to them from the *Scriptures*. For *none* are to be *forced* in this matter (if *Authority* should entertain this *truth*) but

the

the *Spirit* is to be *allowed* its own *liberty*, to *blow*, *when* and *where*, and on *whom* he *listeth*. Neither ought this to *trouble* any, if *all* do not presently *agree* with them; it is *sufficient*, if at first a *few* begin, whom *others* may follow *afterwards*, as *God* shall *perswade* them.

Now as the Church hath power to *chuse its Officers*; so if they prove evil, it hath power, either,

1. To *reform* them. Or,
2. To *depose* them.

1. It hath power to *reform* them, if so be that they may be brought to *repentance* and *amendment*: Yea, as all the *evils* of the *Church* do commonly *first* flow from the *Officers*, so the reformation of it is first to *begin with* them. And who shall reform the *Officers* of the Church, but the *Church it self*? Seeing the Officers will be sure to *tolerate* one *another* in their *Un-Gospel* and *Un Christian* courses, against the *life* of *Christ*, and *true* practice of the *word*, because it is their *own case*. Wherefore seeing the *Generality* of the *present* Clergy, are arrived to this *height* of evil, that they will not be *contented* to be *servants*, but will needs make themselves *Lords* over *Christs* Flock, *plotting* and *striving* to procure and maintain their *Ecclesiastical state* by *secular power*; seeing they have left off to preach *Christ*, and the *Gospel*, and onely preach of *state-affairs*, *raging* and *railing* against the most *just* and *necessary* proceedings of the *Supream* Authority of the Kingdom, as not *sutable* to their *designs*; seeing they are daily *depraving* the *sayings* and *writings* of men more *righteous* then *themselves*; yea, and dare cast a *veil* of their false *Expositions* over the very *Scriptures*, to *darken* them, and make them as *Sack-cloth* to the world, that the *glory* of the *Father*, and the *minde* of *Christ*, might (if it were possible) be wholly *obscured*; yea, seeing they are become so *vile*, that they had rather *Christ himself*, with his *Gospel*, and true *Church*, should *all perish*, then that *they* should suffer the least *diminution* of their *power*, *dignity*, *riches*, *dominion* and *tyranny*: What remains, but that the *Societies* of *Christians* should *meet* together to reform these evil Officers? And whereas *they* are now met to reform the *Church*, it is far more *necessary*, and would be far more *profitable*, for the *Congregations*

Hi profecto non venient in concilium, ut judicentur ab aliis, ut emendent ea quæ ipsorummet conscientia, adeoque totus mundus emendanda esse clamat, sed omnes alios judicare & subjugare; suam illam potentiam retinere & quicquid ipsorum obstat libidini conculcare, è medio tollere conabuntur. Bullinger. Ep ad Edward sext.

gations of the faithful, to meet together to reform them, if yet they be *capable* of reformation; which I confess is much to be *doubted*, seeing they *sin* against so clear a *light*.

2. If the *Officers* of the Church prove *incorrigible*, the Church hath power to *depose* them, seeing they have no *indelible character*, whatever the *Romish* Church affirms. Wherefore as the true *Church* hath power to *chuse* its *Ministers*, and to *continue* them, as long as they remain *faithful* in their work; so also it hath *power* to *remove* them, if they forsake the *truth* and *power* of the *Gospel*. For as in *civil Societies*, not subjected to *tyranny*, *Officers* that prove *evil*, are *moveable* by them that *made* them; so likewise the *Church* hath power to *remove*, if it see cause, this *spiritual Officer*; yea, the *spiritual Officer* is so much the more *moveable* then the *civil*, by how much the more he is *intolerable*, if he be *unfaithful*: for the *civil Officer* can onely hurt in the *things* of this *life*, but the *spiritual* in the things of *eternal life*. Wherefore the *Church* hath the greatest *necessity* to *remove* him, and *chuse* another; seeing this *salt*, when it hath lost its *savour*, is good for *nothing*, but to be cast upon the *dunghil*. And to this, worthy Mr *Tindal*, a blessed *Martyr*, witnesses, saying, "If they (that "is, the Ministers) err from the word, then may whosoever God "moveth his heart, play *Paul*, and correct him; and if he will "not obey the Scripture, then have his brethren Authority by "the Scripture, to put him down, and send him out of Christs "Church, among the Hereticks, which prefer their false doctrines "above the true word of Christ.

Tindal. Pra. &tise of Popish Prel. p. 344.

4. *The true Church hath power to call its Councels.*

4. Can call its Councels.

If the *Church* of the *faithful* stand in *need* of a *Councel*, it may *call* one, if it *pleaseth*, and it hath *power* so to do: and the *Councel* is not to call and appoint the *Church*, as is now done, but the *Church* is to call and appoint the *Councel*; and the *Councel* is to have its Authority from the *Church*, and not the *Church* from *it*. And for the *world*, it can no more call the *Councels* of the *Church*, then the *Church* can call the *Councels* of the *world*; the *Councels* of the *Church* and the *world*, being as *distinct*, as the *Church* and the *world* themselves are.

Now I said, *The Church, if it need a Councel, may call one*; because the *Church* of *Believers* now seldom *needs* a Councel, seeing

all things are so clear in the *word* of *God*, with which the *faithful* are so well *acquainted*.

There are many *other* causes why the right *Church* may very well be without *Councels*; As,

Certain reasons why the true Church may very well want a Councel.

1. Because *Councels*, as the manner was, were either *called* or *congregated* by the *Pope*, a meer *Usurper* in the Church; or by *secular* and *worldly* Princes, who advanced themselves to the *same* power in the *Church*, though upon another *account*. And according to their *ends* and *designs*, *Councels* for the most part, have been *guided* and *pointed*.
2. Because they have, for the most part, been made up of *Bishops* and *Ecclesiastical* men, who have onely sought the *interest* and *advantage* of the *Clergie*, to the prejudice of the body of *Christianity*; by which means they have set up their own *Kingdom* and *tyranny* over all other *Christians*.
3. Because, being *gathered* and *met*, they have especially *medled* with outward *rites* and *Ceremonies*; and touching these, have made *binding* and *coercive laws*, to the overthrow of *Christian liberty*, and the *ensnaring* and *enslaving* mens *consciences*.
4. Because if they have medled with *Doctrine*, they have rather *perverted* and *obscured* the clear word of the *Gospel*, then truly *explicated* and *unfolded* it.
5. Wherein they have done *well*, yet this *evil* hath *always* gone along with it, that they have made *People* rather *look* to *men* then unto *God*, and that in the very *things* of *God*; and to take *divine* things from *them*, by a *humane* faith, rather then from *God himself*, and his *immediate* word, according to the *faith* of Gods *Elect*: and so have given forth *themselves* in their *opinions* and *judgements*, as a *foundation* to the Church, in the stead of *Jesus Christ*.
6. Because, they always determine the *things* of *God*, by the *plurality* of *Votes*, and do not *weigh* but *number* the *suffrages*, and so the *greater* part, still overcomes the *better*; and the *many* that are called, carry the *Vote* against the *few* that are *chosen*; Whereby it comes to pass that the *truth* is *subdued*, and *error* is *established*, by a *plausible* Authority.

7. Be-

7. Because such *Councels*, commonly *attribute* to themselves, *infallibility*; and so, set *themselves* up, as a *peremptory rule*, by which the *whole* Church, must *walk*, and none must *presume* to say to *them cur ita facis?* why do ye so? though they do never so *ill*. They say, they cannot be *judged*, by any other *Christians*, because they are *subject* to none, but *all* other *Christians* are *subject* to them, and are to be *judged* by them: They say, they may *pronounce* all other *Schismaticks*, and *Hereticks*, but *no body* must pronounce *them* so, though they *be* so. And after they have once *drunk* of this *cup* of *abomination*, what *hope* can there be, that *any* thing hereafter, should be done *right* among them?

8. And lastly, because after so many *Councels*, things have not been the *better*, but the *worse* in the Church, through *their* means: for it is not *dead laws* and *orders*, written by *men*, will do the *true* Church any *good*; but the *living law* of *God*, written in their *hearts*, by the *Spirit*, as *God* hath *promised* to do, saying, *I will write my law in their hearts, and put in it their inward parts*. For as the *law* of *sin* hath been *written* in our *natures*, to *corrupt* us; so the *law* of the *Spirit of life*, must be *written* also in our *natures* to *reform* us. Wherefore, after *all* their *Decrees*, *Laws*, *Rules*, *Orders* &c. the *Church* commonly hath been so *far* from being *bettered*, that it hath become more *ignorant* of the *Word*, *superstitious*, *formal*, *prophane* then before.

Nam quid expectemus ex generalium Conciliorum determinationibus, docent nos proxima aliquot seculorum exempla, jam ind. ab annis quandraginta aut amplius. Quo enim crebriora ceiere concilia, tanto magis invaluit superstitio, & error in doctrina, abusus in ritibus, superbia, luxuries, avaritia, omnisq; corruptio in docentibus, vel sacerdotibus, denique fœdissima omnis disciplinæ obliteratio. Bulling. Epist ad Edvard. Sextum.

All these things being *seriously* considered, the *Church* may very well *want* Councels.

Object. Now if any shall say, *Yea, but had not the Church a Councel in the Apostles times*, as we see *Act.* 15? and *did not they order and decree matters in the Church?*

Answ. I answer, the *Church* had a *Councel* then, but far *differing* from the *Councels* now adaies; for,

1. That *Councel* was not *called*, nor *packed* together by *secular power*, but *freely* met together, by the *general consent* of the *Church* of the faithful: For by the *Believers* at *Antioch*, it was *agreed*, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* should go to the *Apostles* and *Elders* at *Jerusalem*, about the matters in *controversie*.

2. This *Councel* did not *consist* only of the *Apostles* and *Elders*, but of the *brethren* also, and *whole Church*; and the

Whole Church, as well as the *Apostles* and *Elders*, did *agree* and *order* what was *done* in that matter.

3. That free *Councel*, consisting of the *Apostles*, *Elders* and *Brethren*, did not *determine* any thing by their meer *power* and *authority*, but *debated* the business by the *word*, & by the *word* concluded it: And so it was not the *Authority* of the *Councel* did any thing, but the *Authority* of the *Word*, that did *all* in that matter; as you may see in the *fore named* place. And in these regards *that* Councel *differs* from *ours*.

Rules to be observed in calling a Councel.

Now if *notwithstanding* all this, the *Church* upon some *occasions*, desire a *Councel* (for *herein* (as in all other *outward* things) it is *free*) it must *minde* these things.

1. That it hath power *it self* to call *one*, as the *Primitive* Church had. And *what* men can *object* against this, of *worldly* Princes *calling* them; let them not say, what they *did*, but what they *ought* to have *done*.

2. As the Church *it self* is to *chuse* its Councel, so it is to *chuse* it, *out* of *its self*; For the *Councels* of the *Church* are *to be chosen out of the Church*, and not of the *world*; out of the *faithful*, and not out of *unbelievers*. For the *natural* man that neither *knows* nor *savours* the *things* that be of *God*, can be of no *use* here; but he must be able to *know* the *word* of *God* from the *doctrines* of *men* and to separate the *precious* from the *vile*, that is *employed* in this *matter*. And so the *natural*, *carnal* and *litteral* man must be *declined* here, where the *things* are wholly *spiritual* and *divine*; and the *spiritual* man onely, who speaks *spiritual* things by a *spiritual* rule, must be *heard* and *regarded*; and so a *man* must *first* be *of* the *Church*, ere he can be *of* the *Councel*.

3. As the *Church* is to *chuse* men out of *it self*, for its *Councel*, so likewise it is to chuse *brethren*, as well as *Elders*; and *Ecclesiastical* men are not to meddle alone, in the matters of the *Church*, and to *thrust* out other *Christians*, as if they were *necessarily* to be *concluded* in, and by *them*.

4. In chusing *Elders* and *Brethren* to this work, great *care* is to be had, that they chuse not *men* of *worldly power* or *place*, lest *worldly power*, and *Authority*, and *honour*, might seem to bear

Ex ejusmodi cœtu. i.e. fideliam, delegandi erunt homines ad concilium; hoc vero esset pulcherrimum concilii, quod ab ipso Spiritu Sancto regeretur. In hanc sententiam & Lyra scriptum reliquit, Ecclesiam nō æstimandam esse ex summis illis, aut spiritualibus ordinibus, sed ex vere credentibus. Luth. Libel. de notis veræ Eccles. tom. 7. f. 152.

bear *sway* in the *things* of the Kingdom of *God*: but they are *rather* to make *choyce* of men *destitute* of these things, that it may *appear*, whatever they *do*, is done only by the clear *evidence* of the *word*, and *influence* of the *spirit*, and so onely by the *law* of *love*, all *secular power* and *force* being *excluded*.

5. *The Church hath power to judge of all Doctrines, and that both of its Officers and Councels.*

The *Clergie* and *Ecclesiastical* men have been wont to challenge to *themselves* the *knowledge* and *judgement* of *Doctrines*, and have *excluded* ordinary *Christians* from it; whereas in *truth*, the *judgement* of *doctrine* belongeth to the *people*, and not to the *Ministers*. And all Christs *Sheep* have *power* to *judge* of the *doctrine* the *Ministers* teach, whether it be *Christs* Voyce, or a *Strangers*, *John* 10. and Christ commanded them to *take heed of false Prophets, which come to them in sheeps cloathing, being inwardly ravening Wolves*, Mat. 7. And the *Apostle* commands them, *to try the spirits, whether they be of God*: and hath said, *Let one or two speak, and the rest judge*, 1 *Cor.* 14. &c. by which, with *many* other *Scriptures* it is evident, That *Ministers* are not to *judge* of doctrine for the *People*, but the *People* are to *judge* of the *doctrine* of the *Ministers*, and according as *they* find it to be of *God*, or *not* of *God*, to *receive* it, or *reject* it. For *every* one is to be *saved* by his own faith, and not by *another* mans; and so is to *take heed* how he *hear* the things of *faith* at his own *peril*; and he is not (if he will be *wise* to *salvation*) to *take* up *things* on *trust*, in a *matter* that *concerns*, *either* his *eternal life*, or *eternal death*.

2. As the *Church* is to judge of the *Doctrine* of its *Officers*, so also of its *Councels*: For the *Church* judges of them, and their *doctrine* also by the *Word*, and doth not *take all*, that *they* determine for *truth*, to be *certain* and *unquestionable*: Yea, in the first *Councel* of the *Apostles*, Act. 15. Other *Churches* and *Christians* had both *liberty* and *power*, to try both the *doctrine* and *Spirit* of the very *Apostles*, in that *matter*, and were not to *swallow* it down *whole*, as they say, because the *Apostles* had *determined* it, and they were *holy* men; but the *faithful* were to *judge*, whether or no, *they* had *judged* according to the *word*, and if *not*, they might have *resisted* them, as *Paul* did *Peter*. And *Paul* gives this

liberty to *Christians*; yea, we have it from Christ himself, whether *Paul* had allowed it or *no*, to try the very *Apostles* themselves, and the very *Angels* of Heaven, whether *they* bring the *right* word or no: for Christ, commanded the *Apostles*, to teach the *Nations*, to *observe and do*, *whatsoever he had commanded them*, and *nothing* else; and saith *Paul*, *If I, or an Angel from heaven, bring you any other doctrine, let him be accursed.* So that the Church hath *power*, to *examine*, *try* and *judge*, the doctrine of the *Apostles* and *Angels*, much more of *other* men, who have not received such an *anoynting*, neither do *live* in so clear a light of *God*.

And thus I have declared, the *things*, which *seemed* to me both *convenient* and *necessary*, for the true Church to *know*, for the *preserving* of that *peace* among *themselves*, which they have in Christ.

Now as the *judgement* of the Church, is to be *rectified* in *these* things; so the *practice* of it, is to be *rectified*, in other things, for the *preserving* it in *peace*.

The things wherein the *practice* of the *Church*, is to be *rectified* in the *Way of Peace*, are either,

1. More *absolute* and *general*. Or,
2. More *special* and *occasional*, in case of *difference* among the *faithful*.

Among the *things* that are more *absolute* and *general*, which are to be *done*, to *procure* and *preserve* the *peace* of the Church: these *nine* things, that follow, have not the *least* place.

1. *Practical* Rule for *Peace*.

The Church is to keep it self distinct from the world.

1. The true *Church* is to *preserve* it self *distinct* from the *world*: and is neither to mingle it *self* with the world, nor to suffer the world to *mingle* it self with *it*. For if the *Church* and the *world*, be *mingled* together in *one* Society, the same *common Laws*, will no more agree to *them*, who are of such *different natures*, *principles* and *ends*, then the same *common Laws*, will agree, to *light* and *darkness*, *life* and *death*, *sin* and *righteousness*, *flesh* and *spirit*.

For

For the *true* Church are a *spiritual* people, being born of *God*, and so they *worship* God in the Spirit, according to the *law* of the Spirit of *life*, that was in Christ, and is in *them*: but the *carnal* Church, is of the world, and only *savours* the *world*, and so will have a worldly *Religion*, *Forms*, *Orders*, *Government*, and all worldly as *it self* is. Now whilst these two are *mingled* together, what *peace* can there be? for what *fellowship* hath *righteousnesse* with *unrighteousnesse*, and *light* with *darkenes*, and *Christ* with the *Devil*? And so what *agreement* have *Believers* with *unbelievers*, or the *true* Church with the *world*? Wherefore it is not the *way of Peace*, to *mingle* the *Church* and the *world*, but to *separate* them, and to keep them *distinct*; that those that are of one *nature* and *spirit*, may be of one *communion* among *themselves*: and this *way of Peace God* himself teacheth us by *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 6.17. saying *Come out from among them my people, and be ye separate*: for to *separate* the *Church* from the world in its *communion* of Saints, is the only way to preserve *peace* in *both*; seeing the *Church* will *best* agree with *it self*, and the *world* with *it self*.

The second *Rule*.

2. The *Church* being thus *distinct* from the world, is to be contended with its *own power*, for its own *affairs*; and is not to *introduce*, or *entertain* any power *in* it, that is not of *it*. Wherefore, the *true* Church, being *such* a Kingdom as is not of *this* world, stands in need of no worldly *power*; and being a *spiritual* and *heavenly* Kingdom, is only to *have* and *exercise* a *spiritual* and *heavenly* power; seeing this power *alone*, and by *it self*, is *able* to accomplish the *whole* good pleasure of *God* in the *Church*, and to work *all* the works in it, that *God* hath to *do*.

The true Church is to be contented with its own power, for its own affairs.

And so, it is strongly to be *suspected*, that those *men*, that dare not commit the *success* of their business to *Christs* power *alone*, but will call in *secular power*, over and above, to *help* them: I say, it is *more* then *probable*, that they have *underneath* some *secular end*, seeing *Christs* power alone is fully *sufficient* to do *all* things that are *necessary* and *profitable* for his Kingdom.

Besides, this *Worldly power* never works *peace*, but always *disturbances*

ſturbances in the Church, putting *all* things out of *Gods* way and method, into *mans*, and working *mans* will rather then *Gods*; yea, *mans* will *againſt Gods*; and it is wholly *contrary* to the very *nature* of the *Church*; and how then can it *agree* with it in *any* thing?

Object. If any ſhall *reply*, that *worldly* power doth *well* in the *Church*, becauſe it *keeps down* many *profane* perſons that would *not* be kept down by the *word*.

Anſw. I *anſwer*; That ſo *far* as ſuch *profane* ones are *governed* by *worldly* power, they are of the *world*, and not of the *Church*; and *worldly power* had *better* govern them in the *world*, its own *proper* ſphear, then in the *Church*, which is beyond their *line*; eſpecially ſeeing the *Church* hath power *enough* in *it ſelf*, to *govern* thoſe that are of *it*; and *they* that will not be governed *willingly* in the *Church*, as *Chriſtians*, let them be governed *againſt* their wils, in the *Commonwealth*, as *men*. For the *Government* of the *Church* is over *men*, as *Chriſtians*, as *ſpiritual*; but the government of the *ſtate* is over men, as *men*, as *natural* and *carnal*. The *firſt* of theſe *governments* belongs to *Chriſt*, and the *latter* to the *Magiſtrate*; And if the *Magiſtrate* be *faithful* in his *Office* and *headſhip*, there is no *doubt* to be made of *Chriſts faithfulneſs* in *his*. But now, if the *Magiſtrate* will not *content* himſelf with his *own* Kingdom and power, but will needs *intrude* on *Chriſts* alſo; and not reckoning it *enough* to govern *men*, as *men*, by his *worldly* power, will alſo by the *ſame* power, be *tampering* with the very *Church*: this both renders *him* troubleſome to the *faithful*, and the *faithful* troubleſome to *him*: *Him* troubleſome to the *faithful*, in that he *uſes* a *power* over them, that is neither *ſutable* to *them*, nor their *affairs*; and *them* troubleſome to *him*, becauſe in *Gods* Kingdom, as they *hear* not the *voice*, ſo neither do they *obey* the *command* of a *ſtranger*

The *Pope* he arrogates *both* ſwords to himſelf, when *neither* belongs to *him*, and therefore in due time ſhall periſh by *both*; and if the *Magiſtrate* ſhal aſſume to *himſelf* power of *both* Kingdoms, *Chriſts*, and the *Worlds*, when of *right* but *one* belongs to him, to wit, the *Worlds*, and not *Chriſts*; it will be very *dangerous*, leſt by *encroaching* on *Chriſts* Kingdom, he *loſe* his own.

Let the *Magiſtrate* therefore uſe *his* power in the *ſtate*, and let him ſuffer *Chriſt* to uſe *his* power in the *Church*, ſeeing his *preſence*

is

is *alwayes* there; and then there will be *quietnes* in *both*, but else in *neither*; seeing Christ will as assuredly *trouble* the *Magistrates* Kingdom, as the *Magistrate* trouble *his*.

The third Rule, is,

The true Church is not to force men unto it against their wils.

Not to *bring* or *force* men into the *Church*, *against* their *wills*. The Kingdoms of the *World* are *unquiet*, because *many* that are *unwilling*, are under those *Regiments*; but *Christs* Kingdom is *therefore* quiet, because *all* the *people* in it are *willing*; and *none* of them are *forced* in, but *all* are *perswaded* in, as it is written, *God perswade* Japhet *to dwell in the tents of* Shem: That is, the *Gentiles* were to be *perswaded*, and not *forced* into the *Church*. And so *Christ* commanded his *Disciples* to go and *teach* all Nations, and not to offer them outward *violence*; and to *perswade* peace, but not to *threaten* or *enforce* it. " For such is the nature of the Church, that inward perswasion is required nowhere, more then here. For none may be " compelled to the faith against their wils, and God will be loved " with the whole heart; and also hypocrisy is a sin chiefly hated of " God. Whereby it comes to pass, that the whole manner of go- " verning the Church must have this scope, that they that are per- " swaded, may be first called unto it, and after kept in it, upon the " same account. And so, the more this manner shall be free from " dominion, so much the more fit it is to govern, increase and con- " firm the Church. And this way onely was used as long as the *Apo-* " *stles* lived, and those that *succeeded* them in the same *Spirit*; and that *unquestionably* for 300 years after: Yea, and when the *Church* came to be *countenanced* by worldly authority, yet this same *freedom* still was *allowed*; of which I shall *produce* a few *testimonies*.

Ea est Ecclesiæ natura, ut nusquam magis requiratur interna persuasio. Nam & ad fidem nemo cogi potest invitus, & Deus toto se corde vult amari, & denique hypocrisis peccatum est imprimis Deo exosum. Quo fit, ut tota Ecclesiæ gubernandæ ratio, hunc scopum habere debeat, ut in Ecclesiam vocentur plurimi persuasi, & in Ecclesia continentur non aliâ ratione. Itaque quo magis ea ratio aberit ab imperio, hoc magis est apta, regendæ, augendæ & confirmandæ Ecclesiæ Chamier. de Oecumen. Pontific.

I read, that *Constantine* the *Emperour* would have no man *enforced* to be of *one* religion more then *another*.

Also the same *Constantine*, in his Epistle to his *Subjects* inhabiting the *East*, saith, " Let no man be grievous one to another: " but what every man thinketh BEST, that let him DO. For

Secundum hanc itaque nostram voluntatem, sano ac rectissimo judicio decrevimus, nemini prorsus denegandam esse potestatem, christianam observantiam vel religionem eligendi ac sequendæ; sed unicuique dandam esse hanc facultatem, ut animum suum illi religioni addicat, quam ipse sibi competere putat, quo nobis Deus consuetam in omnibus diligentiam & probitatem præstet. Euseb l. 10. c. 5. Fox. vol. 1. p. 131.

" ſuch as are wiſe, ought thorowly to be perſwaded, that they " onely mean to live holily, as they ſhould do, whom the Spirit " of God moveth to take their delight and recreation in reading " his holy will; And if others wilfully will go out of the way, " cleaving to the Synagogues of falſe Doctrine, they may at their " own periſl. As for us, we have the worthy Houſe or Congre- " gation of Gods verity, which he, according to his own good- " neſs and nature, hath given us. And this alſo we wiſh to them, " that with like participation and common content, they may feel, " with us, the ſame delectation of minde. *And after*, Let no man " hurt, or be prejudiciall to his neighbour, in that wherein he " thinketh himſelf to have done well. If by that which any man " knoweth, or hath experience of, he thinketh he may profit his " neighbour, let him do the ſame; if not, let him give over, and " remit it till another time. For there is a great diverſity between " the willing and voluntary embracing of Religion, and that " whereunto a man is forced and conſtrained.

Fox vol. 1. p. 150.

I read alſo that *Ethelbert* King of *Kent*, " Being converted to " the faith, *ann.* 586. after his converſion, innumerable others " dayly did come in, and were converted to the faith of Chriſt, " whom the King did eſpecially embrace, but COMPELLED " NONE; for ſo he had learned, THAT THE FAITH " AND SERVICE OF CHRIST OUGHT TO BE VOLUNTARY, AND NOT COACTED.

The *Church* then, at firſt, conſiſted onely of the *willing*, and ſuch as were *perſwaded* unto it by the *Word*, till *Antichriſt* began to *prevail*, and then they fell from *perſwading* to *forcing*; and they no *longer* went about to make men *willing*, by the *Word*, but to get *power* from the *Kings* of the *earth*, to *force* them *againſt* their *wils*. And this *main* piece of the *myſtery of iniquity*, was perfectly brought forth by *Boniface* the *third*, who was the *firſt* that uſed *theſe* words in the *Church*, *Volumus*, *mandamus*, *ſtatuimus*, *ac præcipimus*, We will, we require, we appoint, we command: which is not the *voice* of the *true Miniſters* of *Chriſt*, but the *true voice* of *theeves* and *murderers*. And from *that* time the *peace* of the Church *decayed* apace, when there were moe *unwilling* forced unto it, then *willing* perſwaded. And *true* peace will never be *reſtored* to it again, till men ſhall *abandon* the power of *force*, and onely uſe the *perſwaſion* of the *word*, that the *Church* may conſiſt *onely* of a *willing people*.

The

The fourth Rule, is

To make void the *distinction* of *Clergy* and *Laity* among *Christians*; For the *Clergy* or *Ecclesiastical* men have all along, under the *reign* of *Antichrist*, distinguished *themselves* from *other* Christians, whom they called the *Laity*; and have made up a *distinct* or *several* Kingdom among *themselves*; and *separated* themselves from the *Lay* in *all* things; and called *themselves* by the name of the *Church*; and reckoned *other* Christians but as *common* and *unclean*, in respect of *themselves*. Whereas in the *true* Church of *Christ* there are no *distinctions*, nor *sects*, nor *difference* of persons; no *Clergy*, or *Laity*; no *Ecclesiastical*, or *Temporal*; but they are *all*, as *Peter* describes them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *A chosen generation, a royall Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth the vertues of him that called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.* And so *all* Christians, through the *Baptisme* of the *Spirit*, are made *Priests* alike unto *God*; and *every* one hath right and power *alike*, to *speak* the *word*; and so there is among them no *Clergy* or *Laity*, but the *Ministers* are *such* who are *chosen* by Christians, from among *themselves*, to speak the *word* to *all*, in the *name* and *right* of all; and they have no *right* nor *authority* at all to this *office*, but by the *consent* of the Church. And so *Presbyters* and *Bishops*, or (which is all one) *Elders* and *Overseers* in the Church, *differ* nothing from *other* Christians, but onely in the *office* of the *word*, which is *committed* to them by the *Church*; as an *Alderman*, or *Common Councel* man in the *City* differs nothing from the *rest* of the *Citizens*, but only in their *Office*, which they *have* not of *themselves* neither, but by the Cities *choice*; or as the *Speaker* in the House of *Commons*, *differs* nothing from the *rest* of the *Commons*, but only in his *office* which *he* hath also by the *choice* of the *House*; and *thus*, and no *otherwise*, doth a *Minister* differ from *other* Christians, as *Paul* saith, *Let a man so esteem of us, as of the Ministers of Christ, and dispensers of the mysteries of God.*

The true Church hath no distinction of Clergy and Laity.

But *Antichrist*, he hath cast out the *simplicity* of *Christian* people, and brought *Sects* into the *Church*, dividing it into *Clergy* and *Laity*; and this *distinction*, they have made *visible* by their *garments*, disguising their *Clergy* in their *habit* from *other* Christians, that they might appear *holier* then they, and of another *order* from them. And this *distinction*, hath proved a *Seminary* of *implacable*

placable discord, and *heart-burning* in the Church: For hereupon, the *Clergy* have *preferr'd* themselves above *others* Christians, and have exercised *authority* and *coercive power* and *domination*, and very *tyranny* over them, and have made *themselves* their *Lords*, and given them *Laws*, *rules*, *forms*, *orders*, after their own *mindes*, and *agreeable* to their own *advantages*, and would not so much as *suffer* them to *judge*, whether they were *agreeable to the word of God or no*; as if *other* Christians were their *Subjects*, *Slaves*, *Vassals*, yea very *dogs*. And hence again, the *Laity* (as they called them) have *envied* and *maligned* them, and *hated* and *opposed* them, and as they could get *power*, have been *subduing* them, and have *looked* upon them, as *men* of a different *sect* and *interest* from *themselves*, whose *prosperity*, was their *ruine*, and whose *power*, was their *inslaving*: and *all* this was to the making void Christian *brotherhood* and *communion*. Wherefore the *right* Church, to preserve in it the *peace* of *Christ*, must *admit* of no such *distinction* of *Laity* and *Clergy*, but all Christians must *equally* remain it it, *Kings*, *Priests*, and *Prophets* unto God.

The fifth Rule is.

To keep *equality* in the *Curch*, and that both between *Christians* and *Churches*: for this also is an *excellent way* to preserve *peace*.

1. To keep *equality* between *Christians*. For though according to our *first* Nativity, whereby we are born of *men*, there is great *inequality*, some being born *high*, some *low*, some *honourable*, some *mean*, some *Kings*, some *Subjects* &c. yet according to our *new* or *second* birth, whereby we are *born* of *God*, there is exact *equality*; for here are none *better* or *worse*, *higher* or *lower*, but all have the same *faith*, *hope*, *love*; the same *God*, *Christ*, *Spirit*, the same *divine nature*, the same *precious promises*; the same *incorruptible Crown*, and *inheritance* of *Saints in light*. And therefore saith
Gal. 3. 28. *Paul*, speaking of this *true* Church, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, nor bond nor free, nor male, nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus*. Indeed in the *world*, and before *men* (I say again) there is *distinction* of *persons*, and *inequality*; but in *Christs* Kingdom, and before *God*, all *Believers* are *equal*: and this *equality* preserves *peace*. But when in *this* Kingdom, *some* will be *advancing* themselves above *others*, like *Diotrephes*, that would have the *preheminence*; and *some* will be *striving* to sit at the *right* hand, and some

some at the *left*, whilst they leave others to sit at the *footstool*; this is that which breeds *difference* among the very *Disciples*, who envied *Zebedees* children for such a *desire*. And therefore *Christ*, to *preserve* peace, forbad *Lordship* in his *Church*, and commanded *service*, and tells them, that the *nature* of his *Kingdom*, is not to *place* men one over another, but one *under* another, and that the *greatest* must be the *least*; the *greatest* in the way of the *spirit*, must be the *least* in the way of the *flesh*.

Equality among *Churches*

2. As *equality* among *Christians* is to be kept for the preserving of *peace*, so also among *Churches*: For all *Churches* are *equal*, as well as all *Christians*; and there is no *Church* can set *it self* before, or above *another*; all being *sisters* of one *Mother*; *beams*, of one *Sun*; *branches* of one *Vine*; *streams*, of one *Fountain*; *members*, of one *Body*; *branches* of one golden *Candlestick*; and so *all* equal in *all* things. Wherefore there may, and ought to be a *consociation* of Churches, but no *subordination*, which makes *void* at once, both *equality* and *unity*. And so that *Church*, or those *Churches* that will *set* themselves above *other* Churches that are their *equals*; as the *Classical* above the *Congregational*, &c. they are the *breakers* of Christian *peace* and *unity*; and the *unskilful* vote of the *Assembly* for the *subordination* of *Churches*, was not a *way* to *make* peace, but to *mar* peace in the *Church* of *God*.

Christ the Head is subjected in the subjection of any true Church that is of his body.

Moreover, no *Church* can be subjected to *another*, but *Christ* who is *present* in it, and is *King* and *Lawgiver*, is *subjected* too; which no *true* Church will either *require* or *allow*. For if the *true* Church will not subject the *Word* of *God*, which they have received, to any *men* or *Angels*, but will judge *all* by it, and will suffer *none* to judge *it*; much less will they subject *Christ* the *Lord* of all, to any other *power* or *authority*; for so they should *dishonor* and *disanul* their *Head*. Where two or three are met in *Christs* name, Christ himself is *among* them, and the *Head* of them; and so they can *submit* to no body *else*, seeing *Christ* hath made no *greater*, nor *surer* promise of his *presence*, to *any body* then to *them*.

The sixth *Rule*, is,

The true Church keeps its Officers in subordination to it self.

To keep the *Officers* of the Church in *subordination* to the *whole* Church or *community*; and not to suffer them to get *head* over it: seeing the very *nature* of *ruling* the Church, is not *Dominion*, but *Service*. We reade, *Act.* 11. 2. that when *Peter* had preached in

Regenda Ecclesiæ ratio, non imperium est, sed Διακονία.

the house of *Cornelius*, a Gentile or Heathen, the *Church* of the *circumcision*, to whom *Peter* was Minister, *contended* with him, that he went in to men *uncircumcised*, and did eate with them (for as yet they *knew* not that the *Gentiles* were to be *called*) And *Peter* wa *fain* to give an *account* to them of the *whole* matter, and to shew them, that he was *warned* of God in a *Vision*, to do so, &c. And this was a sign, that *Peter* was a *servant* of the Church, and in *subordination* to it, and no *Lord* over it. And after, *vers.* 22. when the *Church* at *Jerusalem* heard, that the *Grecians* at *Antioch* had received the *Gospel*, they sent *Barnabas* to *Antioch* to *forward* and *perfect* the Work. And also the *Church* at *Antioch* sent forth *Paul* and *Barnabas*, to the work of the *Ministry* in divers *Towns* and *Countries*. All which are an *evident* sign, that the *Church* was *above* the *Officers*, and not the *Officers* above the *Church*.

Now this also will *preserve* peace in the *Church*, to keep the *Officers* in their *proper* place, and to let them remain as *servants* in the Church, which *Christ* hath *commanded*; and not to let them *grow* up to be *Lords* and *Masters*, which *Christ* (knowing the evil and inconvenience thereof) hath *forbidden*. For if the *Officers* get *above* the *Church*, though they be never so *good*, they are *masterful* and *troublesome*; and though never so *bad*, yet will they get a *party* in the Church for *themseves*, and so work *disturbance*; but if the *Church* remain as it *ought*, above the *Officers*, it *quits* them when they grow *evil* and *unruly*, and chooses *better* in their *stead*, and so preserves *union*. Whereas *fixed* and *unmoveable* Officers, when they do *degenerate*, are the causes of all *disturbances* and *confusions*, both in *Church* and *State*.

The seventh *Rule*, is,

All true Christians and Churches take Christ alike for their Head.

For all true *Christians* and *Congregations* to take Christ alike for their *Head*, and not to set up *visible* heads, or *Ring-leaders* to themselves, of *men*; no not of the *best* men. For whilst *some* said, we are of *Paul*; *others* we of *Apollos*; *others*, we of *Cephas*; they were *all* in this matter *carnal*, and *divided*, both from *Christ*, and among *themselves*; whilst *several*, set up several *heads*, whom they especially *owned*, and after whom they were *called*. Whereas *each* that believed, by the Ministry of *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, were through the same *faith* and *spirit* with them, as neer to

Christ

Christ as *themselves* were; and so were not to *set* up a *fellow member*, as a *Head*, to the division of the *body*. I say, each *believer*, and *Communion* of *Saints* hath Christ *equally* for their *Head*, and so ought not to set up, any *outward* or *visible* Head for them to *joyn* to; for this is to rend the *body* in pieces, and to work great *division* and *distraction* among the *faithful*.

And therefore I conceive it is a *mistake* among some *brethren*, to call the *Congregations* of *Christ*, by the *names* of *men*, though godly and eminent; and to say, Mr. *such* an *ones Church*, or Mr. such an ones *Church*; and so to put the *Church* under several Heads, which works *distinction* and *division*; whereas they should rather say, the *Church* of *Christ*, in *such* or *such* a place; it being, *wherever* it is, one *Church*, under one *Head* and *Governor*, *Jesus Christ*.

And therefore let us *know*, that it is part of the *mystery* of *iniquity* for the *Church*, or *faithful*, to have *one* or moe *visible Heads* to go to, not being contented with *Christ* alone. And though this *hath* been, and *will* be, the practice of the *carnal* Church: yet the *spiritual Church* and *people*, do only *own*, and *have* recourse to *Christ*, their *true* and *spiritual* Head. And so they *all*, living as *one body*, and *members* one of another, under *one* onely *Head*, live all in invincible *peace* and *unity*: whereas *difference* of outward *Heads* and *Ringleaders*, always breeds *difference* and *divisions* among *Christians*.

The eighth *Rule*, is,

The true Church keeps out all error in Doctrine.

For the *true* Church, to keep out all *error in Doctrine*; seeing this breeds, not onely *division*, but *confusion* and *ruine* also in the *Church*. Wherefore the *Congregations* of *Christ* must be the more *careful* and *watchful* in this matter. When some *false* Apostles taught at *Antioch*, that, *Except Christians were circumcised after the manner of* Moses, *they could not be saved*; which was a most *dangerous* error against *Christ*, and the *Gospel*; the whole *Church*, first, at *Antioch*, and presently after, at *Jerusalem*, met together to *keep* it *out*: which accordingly, through *God*, they did. So that *what ever* Doctrines are *evidently* against the *Word* of *truth*, and *Gospel* of our *salvation*, the *Church* is to take *care* to *keep them out*, as it loves its own *peace* and *unity*.

Quest.

Now if any say, *By what means may the Church be able to keep out error?*

Answ. The wayes whereby the true Church keeps out Error.

I Answer, It may *certainly* keep out *Error* by these *means*.

1. Let the *Church* suffer none to *teach* among them, that are not *themselves taught of God*; though they have never so great *natural parts*, and never so much *humane learning*. For, when they are the *Teachers* that are *taught of God*, they will only teach the *truth*, which they have *heard and learned from God*: And the *line* of every mans *teaching* must extend no further. But when *they* teach, that are *not* so *taught*, they will in *many* things vary from the *truth*, as it is in *Jesus*'s yea, and under a *form of sound doctrine*, will give forth an *unsound* and *false* sense, to the *deceiving* of many that are *weak* and *simple*; and so under *pretence* of *Christ*, will utter the voice of a *stranger*, and endanger the *misleading* of some *sheep* for a time.

2 Let the faithful *examine* every thing that is taught by the *Word* of *God*, and not receive *doctrines* upon *trust*, from their *Teachers*, who, through the *reputation* of their *learning* and *holiness*, may easily lead them *unawares* into *error*. And therefore let the Church *compare* the *present* Doctrine, *Preached* and *Printed*, and generally *received*, with the Doctrine of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, which without doubt is *sure* and *certain*, seeing those *holy men of God*, *spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*: And *whatever* Doctrine shall be found *contrary* to, or *different* from, *that* Doctrine, let them *reject* it as *reprobate silver*; seeing the *Church is* to be built upon no other *foundation* of Doctrine, then that of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*. And though, through *Gods* especial *goodness*, the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel* be again *revived* among us, at this *present* time, yet ought we not to sit down *content* with the present *state* of things; but to *search* and *see* if our *present* Doctrine do not *yet* err from the *Primitive purity* and *brightness* of the *Gospel*, and that in many *considerable* points; and whether some, or many *corruptions* do not yet *remain* among us, to be *purged* out, by the *light* and *truth*, of the *Apostles* Doctrine.

Wherefore to *conclude* this thing, let us *know*, that the *Church* cannot possibly keep out Error, longer then it *precisely* keeps it self to the *bare* and *naked* Word of *God*, and *tries* all *Doctrines* of their *Teachers* by *it*.

3. The *Church*, that it may be able to *keep out* Errors, must *desire* of God, the Spirit which he hath *promised*; that this *Spirit* of *Truth* may lead them into the *true* and *spiritual* knowledge of the

Word

word, and understanding of the *minde* of Christ. For no man can make any *right Judgement* of the *Word* he hears or reads, without the *teaching* of the *Spirit*. And by this *Anointing*, as we shall be *certainly* taught, which is *Truth*: so also we shall *discern* which is *Error*, and that by so *clear* and *true* a light, that we shall not *mistake*. Wherefore *Christians* must take heed, that *they* do not think, with *carnal* people, that the *ability* to judge of *divine truths* and *humane* and *Antichristian errors*, depends upon *humane learning*, *Arts* and *Sciences*; for thus it will come to pass, that they judging *themselves* unable to judge of *matters* of *Religion*, will wholly *leave* the judgement of them, to *those* whom they *conceive* after this *manner* learned: *whereby* they leave open a *wide door* through which the *Teachers* may bring in *all* sorts of *Errors* upon them. But *Believers* must *know*, that the *gift* of the *Spirit* onely, without all *humane learning*, is *sufficient* to teach us *perfectly*, which is *Truth*, and which *Error*; and to make us able, to *judge* of all *doctrines* of *men* and *Angels*; and that all *humane* learning in the *world*, without the *Spirit*, is not *able* to do this. And so a poor, plain, *Country man*, by the *Spirit* which he hath *received*, is *better* able to judge of *Truth* and *Error*, touching the things of *God*, then the greatest *Philosopher*, *Scholar*, or *Doctor* in the *world*, that is *destitute* of it.

4 Another *notable* means to keep *Error* out of the *Church*, is to *restore* in it, that most *antient Gospel-Ordinance* of *Prophesying*, which, how much soever, it have been out of *use* during the *reign* of *Antichrist*, yet is no *other* then the very *commandment* of the *Lord*, as *Paul* witnesseth, 1 *Cor.* 14 31. where he saith, *When the whole Church is met together, ye may all prophesie one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted*; and adds vers. 37. *If any man think himself to be a Prophet or Spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord Wherefore brethren labour that ye may prophesie.* So that *prophesying* in the *Church*, is *Gods own Commandment*, as every *Prophet* and *Spiritual* man must acknowledge.

Now this *divine Ordinance* of *prophesying*, is three ways *helpful*, to *keep* out *Error*.

1. For first, When *one* man *only* speaks in the *Church*, and *no man* is suffered to *speak* besides *him*, as he is very *subject* to be *puffed* up, and to conceit, that *wisdom* onely dwels with *him*; so he is

more ready to *vent* the thoughts of his own heart, & to speak the *Dreams* and *Visions* of his own *head*. But when he *knows* the Word of *God* is not come to *him* only, but to *others* also, and that they have wisdom and *spirit*, to speak in the *Church*, as well as he, this will both *keep* down his *pride*, and make him *careful* what he *speaks*, when he knows, there are those *present* in the *Congregation*, that are able to reprove his *darkness* by *light*. And this *prophesying* is a strong *bit* and *bridle* in the jaws of *Error*, that it cannot run that *race* in the *Church*, it doth *desire*.

2. When *one* man only *speaks*, and the *doctrine* he preaches proves to be *erroneous*, as it is *ordinarily* in the *common Ministry* of the *Kingdom*, it comes to pass, that *Error* is not onely *preached*, but also goes away *uncontrouled*, and no way is left for the *restraining* Error *proportionable* to that of *propagating* it; no *body* being *permitted* to speak, to *keep* the people from the *poison* of it. And thus whilst the *liberty* of *publike* speaking is permitted onely to *one man* in a *Congregation*, and to *one sort* of men in the *Kingdom*, any Error may *suddenly* be spread over the *whole* Kingdom (as we see by daily *experience*) without any *sufficient* and *proportionable* remedy to *prevent* it.

But now, when the *right* or *power* of *prophesying*, is allowed to the *whole* Church, the *Minister* can no sooner *vent* any Error, but there is some *believer*, or other, whose *heart* God shall *move*, ready to *convince* it by the *word* of *God*: And so, *Error* is as soon *discovered*, and *detected*, as it is *published*; and as soon *destroyed*, as it is *detected*; the *Word* of *God*, though from a *private* Christian, being more *mighty* to *destroy* Error, then *Error* can be, to *uphold* it self against the *Word*.

3. *Prophesying* is a most *useful* means to keep out *Error*, in *this* regard, because it gives the Church *light*, how to chuse *faithful* Teachers out of its *own* children, when it stands in *need* of any *supply* in this kinde. Seeing through the *exercise* of *prophesying*, the Church *knows* and *discerns* which of its *members* are most *spiritual*, and most *clearly* taught of *God*, in *divine* things; and who have received the most *excellent* gifts from *Christ*; and so are most *fit* and *able* to *hold* forth the *Word* of *life*, in most *evidence* and *power* of the *Spirit*, that so the *Church* may be supplied with *Pastors* of her own *Sons*, and not seek out after *unknown persons*; nor be *constrained* to use *mercenary men*, who have been *brought* up to preaching,

as

as their *trade* to live by; whereupon, but *few* of them, can be *expected* to be other then *hirelings*, who will make their *Ministry* serve their own *advantage*, and frame the *Scripture* to sound *such* doctrine, as may best serve their own *turns*.

And in these three regards the use of *prophesying* helps the *Church* to keep out *Error*. *Object.*

Now if any shall *object* against this, That it may seem very *rash* and *absurd*, after an *able*, *learned* man hath spoken in the Church, for an *unlearned* Mechanick presenly to *rise* up and *speak*.

I return this *answer*; That the *true* people of *God* are all *taught* of God; and the *true* Church is a Kingdom of *Prophets*, through the *anointing* of the *Spirit*; and so, they *esteem* not *that*, to be *learning* in the *Church*, which is from *man*, but onely *that* which is *heard and learned from the Father*; and so they neither reckon him that hath *humane* learning, to be learned here; nor him that is *destitute* of it, to be *ignorant*. Yea *farther*, in this *society*, God will have *him*, who is most *unlearned*, according to *humane* literature, to *speak*, that the *vertues* of *Christ* may the more *evidently* appear in the *Saints*; and the *knowledge* of *heavenly* and *divine* truths, may not be attributed to *gifts*, *parts*, *learning* or *studies*, but onely to his *Spirit*, which can even in a *moment*, teach the *ignorant*, and make the simple, *wise*; and open the mouthes of *babes* and *sucklings*, yea and of the very *dumb*, to perfect his praise by. Whereas when a man of great *parts* and *learning*, speaks with *wisdom* and *knowledge* in the Church, this is commonly *attributed* to his *wit* and *study*, and so God loses *all* or *most* of his *praise*; but if a *plain*, *ignorant* man, shall speak *spiritually* and divinely, and hold forth the *mystery* of the Gospel in a *clear* light, then men must *needs* acknowledge God to be the *Author*, of such *grace*, and say, *God is in him of a truth*; and so, *God* is acknowledged the *Author*, of his *own* gifts, and he *himself* is *admired* in his *Saints*. *Answ.*

It will be *again* objected.

Yea but if every one have liberty to speak in the Church, will not this breed great confusion and disturbance?

I answer, *no*, not in the *true* Church, which are a people met in the *name* of *Christ*, and who have *Christ* himself *present* in the midst of them, and so *every* one *demeans* himself answerably to the *presence* of *Christ*, that is, in the *wisdom*, *meekness*, and *modesty* of the Spirit. And there also every one speaks, not after

the *rashness* of his own *brain*, but according to the *revelation* of God, as it is written, *If any thing be revealed to another, let the first hold his peace*; So that *no* man is to speak *here*, but by *Revelation*, or an inward *teaching* and *discovery* of *God*. And where men speak *thus*, as the true Church is to *speak*, there can be no *confusion*, but most excellent *order* and *decency*. Yea. *God* himself, who is not the *Author* of *confusion*, but of *peace* in all the *Churches* of the Saints, he hath *appointed* and *commanded* Prophesying, as the *way* of *peace*; and therefore do not thou *dare* to say, it is the *way* of *confusion*, seeing *God* knows *better* how to order the *affairs* of his *own* Church then *thou* doest.

Wherefore, seeing *Prophesying*, is *Gods* Ordinance in the Church, for the *peace* of it; if any sort of men, shall, notwithstanding what hath been said, still attribute to themselves a *proper* and *incommunicable* Ministry, or the *onely* power to *speak* in the *Church*; I shall but use the *Apostles* words to them, and so pass on from this thing; *What? came the Word of God onely unto you? and is it to come out onely from you?* Nay, it is come to *every* believer *as well* as to *you*; and it is also to come *forth* from *all* them, unto whom it is come; seeing they *cannot* but *speak* what they do *believe*. 1 Cor. 14 36.

5. The *last* means I shall *name*, whereby the true *Church* may keep *errour* out of *it self*, is, *To exercise its power in judging Doctrines*; as *Paul* commandeth, 1 Cor. 14. 29. *Let the Prophets speak, two or three, and let the rest judge.* If they that *publish* Doctrine, should also be *judges* of it, and the people be bound to *subscribe* to their *judgement*, error would not only, by *this* means, have opportunity to be *vented*, but would also be *established* and *confirmed*, without the least *contradiction*. But now *God* hath *appointed* it otherwise in the Church; for *whoever* speak there, the *hearers* are to *judge* of the *truth* of the Doctrine; and accordingly are either to *receive* it, or *reject* it, having *power* to do *either* as they see *occasion*: and so *errour* cannot *prevail* in that Church where the *faithfull* have liberty to *judge* of all *Doctrines*, and do *exercise* that *liberty*. But where they, that *publish* Doctrine, are also the *judges* of it, and the *people* are *bound* up to the Doctrine of the *Teachers*, and may not *question* or *contradict* it, there errour *reigns*, as in its proper Kingdom.

And thus, by *these* means, *errour* may *certainly* be kept out of the

the *Church*, that the *Church* may live in *truth* and *peace*.

But here now a great question will be moved, and that is this,

Whether the Magistrate hath not power to suppress errour by the sword; and whether the Church may not use this remedy against errour, as well as all those before named.

Quest. Whether the Magistrate hath power to suppress error.

I answer; that *many* men of great *eminency*, have *attributed* such a power to the *Magistrate*; and have done him the *honour*, besides his *throne* in the *world*, to erect him a *throne* in *Gods* Kingdom, at the least *equal* to Christ; thinking that *Religion* would soon be *lost*, if *he* should not *uphold* it. And to make this *good*, they have *produced* many *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*; which *seem* to arm the *Magistrate* against the *authors* and *spreaders* of errours.

Answ.

But I desire the *wise-hearted* to consider, whether as *clear* Scriptures may not be *produced* out of the *Old Testament*, to prove, that *temporal* power in the *world* belongs to *Ecclesiastical* men, as that *spiritual* power in the *Church* belongs to *worldly* Magistrates. And to this *purpose* (because I would not be too *large* in this matter, now) I shall desire *him*, who hath a minde to be *instructed*, to *reade* and *weigh* the *Reply of the French Prelates to the Lord* Peters; which he may finde in *Fox* his Book of Martyrs, *vol.*1 *p.* 467.

Wherefore, seeing the *Scriptures* of the *old* Testament, are every whit as *strong*, to give *Ministers* power in *temporal* matters, as *Magistrates* in *spiritual*; it is without all question, the only *sure* and *safe* way to *determine* this cause by the *new Testament*, or the doctrine of *Christ*, and the *Apostles*, by *whom* in these last dayes God hath spoken *fully* to the Church, and *after* whose doctrine there is no *other* word to be expected. And because *herein* I finde no *such* power given to the *Civil* Magistrate, to *judge* and *determine* in *spiritual* matters, therefore I conclude, he *hath* none.

Now if any shall say, *This is a great wrong to the Magistrate, to thrust his power out of the Church, and to confine it to the world.*

Object.

I answer, That to make the *Church* an *Ecclesiastical* Kingdom, standing in outward *Laws*, *orders*, *authority*, *dignity*, *promotion government*, all which are to be *granted*, *established*, and *managed* by *state* power, and yet to deny the *Magistrates authority* and *influence* into these things, which flow from his *own* power, and *consist in* it, and by *it*, this is to *streighten* and to *wrong* him indeed. But to declare the *true* Church to be a *spiritual* Kingdom as *Christ*

Answ.

hath made it, and not *at all* of this *world*, but the very Kingdom of *heaven* upon *earth*, and *thereupon* to deny him power in *it*, is no more to *prejudice* the Magistrate, then to *deny* him *power* in *heaven*. Seeing the *Sons* Kingdom which is *heaven* on *earth*, is to be as *free* from *worldly* and *humane* power, as the *Fathers* Kingdom which is *heaven* in *heaven*: Christ being to be all, in all, in *this*, as *God* is to be all in all, in *that*.

And so to *deny* the Magistrate, *that* power which *Christ* never *granted* him, is no *wrong* to him at all; but to *grant* him, and *gratifie* him with such power, would be a *great* and *intolerable* wrong, to the *truth* and *Church* of Christ, as in many *other* things, so in this *present* matter, we are speaking of, as you may see, in the following *particulars*.

For the putting the *power* of the *sword* into the *Magistrates* hands, to suppress *errour*, is attended with these evils.

1. Hereby the *Magistrate* is made a *Judge* of *Doctrines*, and hath *power* given him, to *pronounce* which is *truth*, and which is *errour*, being yet no more *infallible*, yea everywhit as liable to *erre*, as the *meanest* of the people. And what *Magistrate* is there, that hath the *power* of the *sword*, but will uphold his own *Religion* and *judgement* to be the *truth*, though never so *false*, and will sentence what ever is *contrary* thereunto, to be *errour* though never so *true*? and so the *truth* and *Word* of *God*, which only is to *judge* all, and it self to be *judged* of none, by this means is made *subject* to the *judgement* of vain man, and shall either be *truth* or *errour*, as he pleases to *call it*; and *errour*, when it *pleaseth* the Magistrate, shall be *adorned*, with the *glorious* title of *truth*; and shall have his *authority* to *countenance* and *uphold* it. And how great a prejudice, this hath been, and is to the *truth*, and how great an *advantage* to *errour*, it is very easie to judge.

Quest. Now if any shall say, that the *Magistrate* may not judge of *doctrine* by himself, and use his *sword* accordingly, but he may *take* to him the *counsel* and *advice* of *godly* and *able Ministers*, as now of the *Assembly*, and so may *judge* and *punish*, according to their judgement.

Answ. I answer; Is it *fit*, that the *Magistrate* in so *great* matters should be *blinde folded* himself, and *see* onely by other mens *eyes*?

Again, if the *Magistrate* judge, according to the *judgement* of the *Ministers*, and depending more on their *knowledge* then his own,

own, shall draw his *sword* against *whomsoever* they shall *perswade* him; What *higher* honour doth he *attain* to in *all* this, then to become their *Executioner*? Yea, if he punish *amiss* he may prove a very *murderer*: Pilate, in this case, may be a *sea-mark* to all the *Magistrates* in the *world*, who following the *councel* and *judgement* of the *High Priests*, put the *Son* of *God* himself to death, as if he had been the *son* of *perdition*: Which, I say, may serve, for a *sufficient warning*, to the end of the world, to all *Magistrates*, that they confide not on the *judgement* of the *Clergy*, but that they be sure *themselves* in what they *do*.

2. The putting *power* into the *Magistrates* hands, to suppress *error* by the *sword*, gives him full opportunity to destroy and slay the *true* children of *God*, if at any time he shall mistake, and judge them *Heretikes*. For what *power* men *ignorantly* allow a *godly* Magistrate, against *true* Heretikes: the *same* power, will *all* Magistrates arrogate to *themselves*, as their *just due*, against all those that *differ* from *themselves* in matters of *Religion*, though their *judgement* who so differ from them, be never so *true*. And thus the *Magistrate*, who is a most *fallible* Judge in these things, in stead of *tares*, may pluck up the *wheat*; and kill the *faithful*, in stead of *Heretikes*, at his *own pleasure*, till he have destroyed all the *faithful* in the land.

Wherefore, let all *Christians* take heed, how they *favour* the Magistrates with *this* power, to *punish* those, whom *he* judges *Heretiks*: for if he shall *change* his minde, as he easily may, seeing he is but a *man*, or if *another* shall succeed him, of *another* minde, that very *Sword* may be *sheathed* in their *own* bowels, which now they *draw forth* against other mens.

3. When the *Magistrate* assumes *power* to himself, to suppress *error*, this makes Ministers *negligent* in studying the *Scriptures*, the *Magistrate* doing that by *force*, which they ought to do by the *word* and so saves them their *labour*: For when once the *Ministers*, shall have so far *interessed* themselves in the Magistrate, as to *procure* him, to call for the *Goaler* and *Executioner*, against *whomsoever* shall oppose their *Doctrine*, they will then need no *great* pains to study the *word*, that they may be able to *convince* the *gainsayers*, and *perswade* the *rebellious*, seeing the *Magistrates* sword, at all *adventure*, is to defend their *Doctrine*; and all the *objections* against it, either from *reason* or *Scripture*, the *hangman* is to *answer*. And

so

so the *Pastors* having their work, as they conceive, thus *done* for them, to their *hands*, do *commonly* betake themselves to *ease* and *idleness*, and to the *prosecution* and *enjoyment* of *worldly* things, and grow *careless*, and negligent of the *Scripture*, and word of *God*, whereupon *error* steals in *apace* upon the *Teachers themselves*, whereby, by *degrees* they *corrupt*, and *seduce* very many. And thus whilst the *Magistrate* thinks to *chase* out error *before* him, *one way*, he *lets* it in *behinde* him *seven wayes*.

4. This takes men off, from the *certain* means to *destroy* errors, which is the *word*, and *leads* them to *that*, which can *never* destroy it, which is the *sword* of the *Magistrate*; and so the *Devil* here in hath a notable *Stratagem*; For he fears not all the *Swords*, and *Halters*, and *Weapons*, and *Prisons* in the world, to *destroy* error withall, but as *securely* contemns all *these* things, as *Leviathan* a *Bulrush*; and yet doth earnestly *stir* up the *world*, to use *these* things *against* him, and his errors as the *only* meanes to *subdue* him. Whereas the *only* thing he *fears*, is the *word* of *God*, which is that *mighty power*, that can binde the *Devil*, and *destroy* his *Kingdom*, and *break* down all his *strong* holds of *errors* and *Heresie*, and he is in *no sort* able to stand out against the power *thereof*. Wherefore in his great *cunning*, he causes men to lay aside *this*, that is *able* to *prevail* against him, and to go to the *sword* of the *Magistrate*, which will do him no *harm*. And thus the *sword* of the *Magistrate*, presuming to lift *it self* up against *Error*, in stead of the *word* of *God*, is so far from *destroying* Error, that it *upholds* it; and *strengthens* Satans Kingdom, whilst it seems to *destroy* it.

By these things it *appears*, how great an *Error* and *evil* it is, for any to *attribute* to the *Magistrate* or for the *Magistrate* to assume to *himself*, power to suppress *Error* by the *sword*.

Quest. If any shall yet demand, *Whether the Magistrate can do nothing at all, towards the suppressing of Errors?*

Answ. I answer, *This* he may do; he *may* and *ought*, and if he be a *godly* man, he *will countenance* and *encourage* faithful *Ministers* (that are *called* of *God*, and *anointed* by the *Spirit*) to this work of the Gospel; and having done *this*, he need not *trouble* himself any *further*; for the word *preached*, will do all the *rest*. And let it not be *doubted*, but if the *truth* of *God* do enter the Lists against *Error*, it will be *infinitely* able to *prevail* of it self *alone*, without *calling* in any *power*, or *borrowing* any *weapons* from the *World*.

The

The ninth Rule, is.

By no means, to *inforce Uniformity*, in the outward *orders* and *discipline* of the Church. For such *Uniformity*, hath been in *all* ages, not only the *hinderance*, but the very *break neck*, of the Churches *peace* and *unity*.

The true Church doth not inforce Uniformity, in outward Orders and Discipline.

Now because this is so *vehemently* and *strongly* urged by the *unskilful builders* of this age, I shall the more *fully* acquaint the *Reader* with the *State* of this business, from the very *beginning* of the *Gospel*; and *show* when this part of the *mystery* of *iniquity*, first *invaded* the Church of *God*.

Most *manifest* it is, that the *Apostles* and *Disciples* of *Christ*, were only intent about the *Doctrine* of *Salvation*, and so accordingly *preached* and *presst* nothing but *faith* in *Christ*, and *love* to all the *Saints*; as being the only necessary things, which *Christians* were to *regard*; And for all outward *Rites*, and *Ceremonies*, and *forms*, wherein *Christ* had made them *free*, they *commanded* them, to *stand fast* in that *liberty*. And so *they* gave no *heed*, nor *regard*, to the observation of *dayes* and *times*, neither *bound* the Church, to any *Ceremonies* or *Rites*, except those *necessary* things mentioned, *Act.* 15. to wit, *things strangled*, *and blood*, which was then ordained by the *holy Spirit*, not without *urgent* and *necessary* cause. For when the *murdering* and *blood* of Infants, was commonly laid to the charge of *Christians* by the *Heathens*, they had no other *Argument* to help themselves, but their *own Law*, by which they were commanded to *abstain* from the *blood of common Beasts*, much more from the blood of *innocent* men. And therefore that *Law* seemeth to be *given* by the *holy Spirit*, and also for the same end, to be *continued* in the Church, so long as the *cause* thereof, that is the *persecutions* of the heathen *Gentiles* continued. And besides these, we reade of no other *Ceremonies* or *Rites*, which the *Apostles* greatly regarded, but left *such* things *free*, to the *Liberty* of Christians, *every* man to use therein his own *discretion*, for the *using*, or *not* using thereof. Whereupon, as concerning all the *ceremonial* observations of *dayes*, *times*, *places*, *meats*, *drinks*, *vestures*, and such others,

Fox vol. 1. pag 72.

of all these things, neither was the *diversity* among men, greatly noted, nor any *Uniformity* greatly *required*. Thus *Christian Liberty* prevailed in the *Church*, and *Christian men* did not much *struggle* about *indifferent* things, till the *Asians* and *Romans*, began to disagree about *Easter-day*: to compose which controversy, *Polycarpus*, a godly *Martyr*, went to *Rome* (*ann.* 157. and in the reign of *Antoninus Pius*) to *Anicetus*, then *Bishop* there: and though these *two*, to wit, *Polycarpus* and *Anicetus*, differed in their *judgements* and *opinions* in this matter, yet they still retained *Christian communion*, and avoided all *breach* of *peace*. Afterwards, in the reign of *Commodus*, the *Christians* enjoying some *respite* from persecution, began to contend *again* among themselves, about the *ceremony* of *Easter*; and neither *yet* did the *difference* prevail so far, as to *break* the *bond* of *love* and *communion* of *brotherly life*: though they of the *West*, pretending the tradition of *Paul* and *Peter* (which yet indeed was the tradition of *Hermes* and *Pius*, and not theirs) kept one *day*; and they of *Asia*, pretending the tradition of *John*, kept *another*. After this, *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*, rose up a great *stickler* in the controversy of *Easter*, and would needs have *excommunicated* the Churches of *Asia* for not *yielding* to his *judgement*; to whom *Irenæus* writing, touching the *diversity* of outward things, used by the *Primitive* Christians, hath these words, "Notwithstanding the variety of ceremonies "among the former Christians, they all kept peace among them-"selves; and we (saith he) still retain it; and the difference of "our fasting, commends the unity of our faith. And *thus* the Doctrine of *Christian liberty* remained *sound* and entire, till this *Victors* time, which was *ann.* 200. And he earnestly endeavoured to *draw*, or rather *inforce*, the Churches of *Asia* to his opinion. And then began the *Uniformity* of keeping that *Feast* to be first required, as a thing *necessary*; and all they to be *accounted* as *Heretickes* and *Schismatikes*, who *dissented* from the judgement of the *Bishop* of *Rome*.

Iran & Mebex. l. 4.

Nihilo tamen minus omnes illi, pacem inter se retinuerunt, & retinemus etiamnum; & jejunii dissonantia, fidei concordiam commendat.

Now against this judgement of *Victor*, *Polycrates* and many other *Bishops* and *brethren* of *Asia*, declared; and the matter had burst out into a great *flame*, had not some *godly men* of those times, brought *forth* the word of God to *quench* it. Among whom *Irenæus*, as *Eusebius* relates, speaks to this effect, "That the variety "and difference of ceremonies, is no strange matter in the Church "of

Euseb. l. 5. c. 26.

" of Christ, when as this variety is not onely in the day of *Easter*, " but also in the manner of fasting, and in divers other usages " among the Christians. For some fast one, some two dayes, some " more; and others counting 40 hours both day and night, reckon " that for their full fast day. And this so divers fashion of fasting " in the Church, began not in our time, but in theirs who lived " before us. And yet notwithstanding they with all this diversity, " were in unity amongst themselves; and so be we: Neither doth " this difference of ceremonies any thing hinder, but rather com- " mend the agreement of our faith.

And he bringeth forth the examples of the Fathers, of *Telesphorus*, *Pius*, *Anicetus*, *Soter*, *Eleutherius*, and such others, who neither *observed* the same *usage* themselves, nor *prescribed* it to *others*; and yet notwithstanding kept *Christian charity* with such as came to *communicate* with them, though not observing the same form of things, which they *observed*; as well appeared by *Polycarpus* and *Anicetus*; who although they agreed not in one *uniform* custom of *rites*, *Communionem tamen inter se habuerunt*, yet had communion with one another. And thus *Irenæus*, in his *practice* answering his *name*, perswaded the *peace* of the Church, notwithstanding *diversity* of *forms* and *rites*: And so *Christian liberty* was still preserved in the *Church*, against the *tyranny* of *Uniformity*, till the *Nicene Councel*.

And farther, *Socrates*, the Writer of the *Ecclesiastical* History, who lived after the dayes of *Theodosius*, speaking of the fasting before *Easter*, saith, " The Christians that dwell at *Rome*, fast " three weeks continually before *Easter*, besides the Sabbath, " and the Sunday: but those that dwell in *Illyria*, and all *Greece*, and *Alexandria*, fast six weekes before *Easter*. And speaking of the severall sorts of *fasting* in severall Churches, saith, " And be- " cause no can bring forth any Commandment written of this " matter, it is plain, that the Apostles left this fast free to every " mans minde and will, that no man might be compelled by fear " and necessity, to do that which is good.

Socrat. l. 5. c. 19. Perspicuum est, Apostolos liberam potestatem in eadem, cujusque menti & arbitrio permisisse, ut quisque nec metu, nec necessitate inductus, quod bonum sit ageret.

And in the *same* Chapter, he relates many several *forms* and *usages* in several *Christian Churches*, and concludes that matter, thus; " But, saith he, to commit to writing all the rites of

Verum omnes Ecclesiarum ritus, qui in singulis urbibus regionibusque usurpantur, scriptis mandare, ut valde laboriosum est, ita vix aut ne vix quidem fieri potest.

" Churches that are used in each City and Country, as it would be " very troublesome, so hardly could it be done.

And yet further; I finde that *Austin*, who was sent into *England* by Pope *Gregory*, *ann.* 598. among other *questions* to the Pope, propounds this as *one*: " That seeing there is but one faith, " how it should happen, that the customes and ceremonies of " Churches should be so divers?

And *Gregory* returns this answer, " The custom of the Church " of *Rome*, what it is, you know; wherein you have been brought " up from your youth: but rather it pleaseth me better, that " whether it be in the Church of *Rome*, or in any French Church, " where ye finde any thing that seemeth better, to the service and " pleasing of God, that ye choose the same, and so infer and bring " into the English Church (which is yet new in the faith) the " best and pickedst things, chosen out of many Churches. For " things are not to be beloved for the place sake, but the place is " to be beloved for the things that be good. Wherefore such " things as be good, godly and religious, those choose out of all " Churches, and induce to your people, that they may take root in " the minds of English men.

So that *yet* you see, the *Church* was not *enslaved* by any *enforced Uniformity*, but kept its own *Christian freedom*, till *Antichrist* grew up to more *heighth*, and got the secular power of *Princes*, to do what he *listed* in the *Church*; and then *he*, and his *Clergy*, made *laws* of all that seemed *good* in their *own* eyes, and *enforced* men to them, against their *wills*. And thus he *reigned* for many *hundred* yeers together, till the *determinate* time of the *Apostacy* began to be fulfilled; and then *God* poured forth his *Spirit* upon some *chosen* servants of his, to oppose *Antichrist*, as in *other* parts, of the *mystery* of *iniquity*, so in this also of Uniformity. Among others who after the general *falling* away, opposed this *Uniformity*, was *John Gerson*, Chancellor of *Paris*, who lived about an 100. yeers before *Luther*; and in many things received much *clear* light from *God*: he in his Sermon before the *King* of *France*, in the name of the *University* of *Paris*, *pro pace & unione Graecorum*, in his 7th. consideration speaks thus;

John Gerson against Uniformity.

" *Men*

" *Men ought not generally to be bound by the positive determinations* " *of Popes* (and it will as well hold of all others, who arrogate to " themselves an Ecclesiastical Supremacy, whether they be Coun- " cels or Assemblies) *to hold and believe, one and the same manner of* " *Government, in things that do not immediately concern the truth* " *of our Faith, or of the Evangelical Law.* And he saith, this con- " sideration well taken and understood, would be the prin- " cipal key, to open a door of peace, between the *Greeks* and " *Latines*, who differ in many outward Forms and Rules: as in " Baptisme; the *Latine* Church saith, I baptize thee; the *Greek*, " *Baptizetur servus Christi*; Let this servant of Christ be baptized. " And in the Supper, the *Latine* Church useth unleavened, the *Greek* " leavened bread, &c. And herein he spake as a Christian, that said, " *Quelibet provincia abunder sensu suo*, Let every Province a- " bound in its own sense. Note also (saith he) that a good Prince, " permits divers Laws and Customs, of divers of his Subjects, so " they be not evidently against the Law of Nature: And not to " do so, would often be the destruction of the Commonwealth. " As the Lord of *Arras*, a City of *Picardie*, was wont to say, that " *Flanders* would be governed otherwise then *France* or *Burgun-* " *dy*. And this consideration (saith he) rightly understood (to " wit, not to *press* Uniformity in the Church, but to let the " *Church* use its *liberty* in these things) would be an excellent " beginning of the Reformation of the Church, notwithstanding " the contradiction of many of the Court of *Rome*.

Homines non non generaliter astringi debent, per determinationes positivas Paparum, ad tenendum & credendum, unum eundemque gubernandi modum, in rebus quæ non proxime respiciunt, vel sine medio, fidei nostræ veritatem, vel legis Evangelicæ

Luther against Uniformity.

Luther also, that *chosen* Vessel of Christ, did *clearly* oppose this *evil* of *Uniformity*: He thus delivers his *judgement* touching *Uniformity* of *Ceremonies*: " If one Church will not follow " another, of its own accord, in those outward things, what " need is there that it should be compelled by the Decrees of " Councels, which presently are turned into laws and snares of " souls. And therefore let one Church freely imitate another; " or let it be suffered to use its own way, so that unity of " Spirit be preserved in Faith and the Word, though there " be variety and diversity in the flesh, or Elements of the " world.

Si una Ecclesia alteram non vult imitari externis istis, quid opus est conciliorum decretis cogi, quæ mox in leges & animarum laqueos vertuntur? Imitetur ergo altera alteram libere, aut suis moribus fruatur suis; modò unitas spiritus salva sit in fide & vero, quantumvis sit diversitas, & varietas in carne & elementis mundi.

Again, the same *Luther*, after he had set down a *Form* of Celebrating the *Supper*, for the *Church* of Christ, at *Wittingberg*, concludes thus, *In quibus omnibus cavendum, ne legem ex libertate faciamus, &c.* "That is, In all which we must take heed, that we "make not a *law*, of *liberty*; or constrain them to sin, who shall "either do otherwise, or shall omit some things, so they permit "the words of blessing to remain entire, and do all act here in "Faith. For these ought to be the Rites of CHRISTIANS, "that is, of the children of the FREE-WOMAN; who may "keep them willingly, and of their own accord, having power to "change them, when, and as often as they will. And therefore "there is no cause, that any should either desire, or establish, "any necessary Form, as a law in this matter, whereby he may "either ensnare, or trouble mens consciences. And therefore we "read not in the ancient Fathers, or Primitive Church, any ex-"ample of any such Rite, but onely in the *Romane* Church. And "if so be they had established any thing for a law in this matter, "we ought not to have kept it; *Quod legibus hic obstringi, nec possent, nec debent*;" Because these things neither could, nor "ought to be bound by Laws. Moreover, if divers men shall use "a diverse Rite, let none either judge or contemne another, but "let every one abound in his own sense, and let us all favour and "judge the same things, though for Forms we act diversly: and "let each Rite please others, lest by diversity of Rites, follow "diversity of opinions and sects, as it came tō pass in the Church "of *Rome*. For outward Rites, though we cannot want them, "as neither meat nor drink, yet they commend us not to God, "but onely Faith and love commend us to him. And therefore "let that of *Paul* take place here, That the Kingdom of God "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the "Holy Spirt; and so no Rite nor Form is the Kingdom of God, "but faith within us, &c.

Cujus exemplar sicubi & aliis placuerit imitari, licet: sin minus, ut istam, libenter locum dabimus, parati, a vobis & quibuscunq; aliis, commodiora accipere.

And at the end of the same *form*, for the *Church* of *Wittenberg*, which he writes out for *Nicholas Hausmannus*, a Godly Minister, he saith, "Which Copy, either you or others may follow if you "please; if not, we willingly give place to the anointing, being "our selves to receive from you, or any others, more profitable "things. These things he spake like a *Christian* indeed, and we acknowledge the *voice* of *Christ* in him; as in *others*, that act these things

things *peremptorily*, and *command* and *inforce* them by *secular* power, we are *sensible* of the *voice* of *strangers*, and of such strangers, as are *Theeves* and *Murtherers*.

Melancton also, perswades certain *Christians* to *unity*, who differed in *Uniformity*, in these words. "Seeing we do agree among our selves in the chief Articles of Christian Doctrine, let "us imbrace one another with mutual love; and let not unlikeness, and variety of Rites and Ceremonies, [and *Bucer* quoting this place, adds, no nor of Ecclesiastical government] disjoyn our minds.

Melancton against Uniformity. *Cum de præcipuis articulis doctrinæ Christianæ inter nos conster, complectemur nos mutuo amore, neque dissimilitas & varietas rituum & cæremoniarum, disjungere debet mentes nostras.*

Upon *all* these Testimonies, which these *godly* men give from the light of the *word*, which we acknowledge in them, it is *evident*, that all *forms* are to be left *free*, to the *faithful* and *Congregations* of Saints, and when any shall *set down* any form, the *Congregations* of the *faithful* may use them, so far forth as they *please*; or may *add*, or *alter*, or wholly *reject* them; and no *Laws* are to be made in this matter, (which the *secular* power should *inforce*) to *insnare Consciences*, and to infringe *Christian Liberty*, and to straighten the *Spirit* in those in whom it dwels, and to *obscure* the *vertues* of Christ in his people.

Wherefore it is most evident, that they are most horribly mistaken, that now urge external *Uniformity* on the Church, as the only means of *Unity*, who scarce *minding*, I am sure not naming one *body*, one *spirit*, one *hope of calling*, one *Lord*, *Faith*, *Baptism* *&c.* to make the Church one, do earnestly and fiercely labour for *one* outward *Form*, and *Order*, one *Directory*, one *Confession*, one *Catechism*, one *Discipline*, [and to have these things of their own devising inforced on the Church, by the power of the State] as the onely means *their* hearts can find out, to make the Church *one*. But the *Seers*, are *blinde* in this matter, and the *Prophets* *prophesie false things*. For if the *unity* of the Church, stand *onely* or chiefly in *Uniformity*, what woful *division* will be found in it? For the *Fathers before the flood*, lived in *one* form, the *Fathers after the flood*, in another; the Believers *under* the *Law* in another; the Believers under the *Gospel* in another; yea *these* being free from *all* forms, used *any*, according to the *wisdom* of the *Spirit*: *Christ* himself, and *John Baptist*, who *both* lived in the same

same time, observed no *Uniformity* between them; for *John* lived *retiredly* in the *Wilderness*, and came neither *eating* nor *drinking*; and *Christ* lived in the frequency of the world, and did both *eat* and *drink*. And their *Disciples* observed no *Uniformity*; for *Johns Disciples fasted* oft, and *Christs* not at *all*, in *those* days. Besides, at first, the *believing Jews* used another *form*, then the believing *Gentiles*: and after among the *Gentiles*, the *Greek* Church used one *form*, the *Latine* another; and *several* Churches under *both several forms*; and so the *Church* on *earth*, according to the *infirmity* of the *flesh*, still uses *some* or *other* form; and the *Church* in *Heaven*, is without *all* form. Now then, if we shall have no *Unity*, but where is *Uniformity*, what an Earthquake of *confusion* and *division* will this make through the whole Church of God in *all ages*, and under *all* Gods own *dispensations* in the world, yea through the *whole* Church in *Earth* and *Heaven*? Wherefore, I dare be bold to affirm, that *imposed* and *inforced Uniformity*, is one of the greatest *enemies*, to the true Churches *unity*, that *Antichrist* himself could devise. And therefore, let not the *true Church* suffer it self to be *reduced* under this *bondage* again, through *specious* pretences of *Reformation*; but let the Church *know*, it may use what *forms* seem good to *it self*; and that its *true unity* stands, in being *one body*, and one *spirit*, &c. as hath been before declared. And *thus* onely, the *Church* in *all* ages is *one*; yea *thus* onely the Church in *earth* and *heaven* is *one*.

And therefore, I desire the *faithful* to know, that *Uniformity* is to be *kept out*, or if it be *brought* in, it is to be *cast* out, for the preserving of *peace* in the Church. For, that *God* might make *Jews* and *Gentiles* one, He *abolished the Laws of Commandments contained in Ordinances*, *Ephes.* 2. 15. Whence it is *evident*, that *God* so *highly* valued, the *peace* of the *faithful*, that to bring *this* about, he *repeals* his *own* Institutions, and *dissolves* his *own* outward *Ordinances*. Now if the *Ceremonies* of Gods *own* ordaining, were to be made *void*, rather then to continue to the *prejudice* of the Churches *unity*: how much more any *Ceremonies*, or outward *rules* of our *own* or other *mens* devising? Let him that reads understand.

And these are the *practical rules*, in the *way* of the *Churches peace*, that are more *absolute* and *general*.

And now we *hasten* to the *rules* that are more *special* and *occasional*.

sional, in case of *difference* among the faithful. In which case, we are necessarily in the *first* place to consider, the *weight* of the things, wherein they *differ*; to wit, whether those things be *such*, as are *necessary* to salvation, or no.

If they be *not* such things as are *necessary* to salvation; then first, they are either things *Ceremonial* and *Circumstantial*; Or secondly, *very truths* themselves; yet such, wherein a *Christian* may for the present *erre* without *danger of salvation*.

If the *difference* be in *Circumstantial* and *Ceremonial* things, we should minde *these* things to preserve *peace*.

Rules to be observed to procure and preserve peace in the Church, when the faithfull differ among themselves. The weight of things wherein they differ, is to be considered. Rules to preserve peace when the difference among the faithfull is in circumstantial things.

1. That we *ought* not to contend for *vanities*; nor to trouble *our selves* and the *Church* of God, with *trifles*, and things of no *weight* or *moment* at all. It is a *wonder* to us in *these* days, that the *ancient Christians* should so *earnestly* contend about the *day*, on which *Easter*, as they called it, was to be celebrated, and upon difference *herein*, should divide into *Sects* as they did; seeing there always shone *light* enough in the *Gospel*, to declare this to be a *slight* circumstance not worth the *minding*. The Apostle exhorts the *Philippians*, to *strive* together for the *faith* of the *Gospel*, but no where for the form of it, in *one* thing or *other*.

2. We *ought* not, for *contrary mindedness in these* things, to avoid *Christian converse* and *communion* with one another; for *strangeness* of Christians in these cases, both *breeds* and *increases* suspitions and jealousies, & causes, that we harbour hard thoughts, *brother* against *brother*, and it takes away all opportunities of *conference*, and of understanding and perswading one another, and so of *Reconciliation*.

3. In these things, whereof *neither* commend us to *God*, we are not to *condemn* one another: for to *condemn* one another for *every* difference in *judgement*, produces *innumerable Sects* in the Church; then which nothing can be more *destructive* to the peace of it; seeing such *deadly* enmity arises among *Sects* as we see by *daily* experience. And therefore, that *rash judgement*, that *produces* these *Sects*, is the *great enemy* to the peace of the *Church*, and the *great advancer* of the *Devils* work of *division*.

4. To be contented with the substance of Gods Kingdom in the faithfull.

4. Let us know, wherein the *essence* of Gods Kingdom stands, to wit, in *righteousness* and *peace*, and *joy* in the holy Spirit, in *Faith* and *Love*, &c. and *not* in *outward Ceremonies* and *Orders*; and where the power and *substance* of Gods Kingdom is, let us be contented, though there's a *difference* in form and *circumstances*. Let us take careful heed, that we do nothing against the power and substance of godliness, under pretence of the form and circumstance. The *highest good* in the Church, is *salvation in Christ*; and the *end* of all gifts, given to all *Apostles*, *Prophets*, *Evangelists*, *Pastors*, *Teachers*, is to bring us all to the *unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God*. And if so be that *this* be done, the *Church* is not to be troubled with other things; yea, *all* other things are to give way to *this*. Where the *heavenly things themselves* are present, we ought not in these dayes of *grace* and *truth*, to contend about the *shadows* of them.

5. To take care in these three things of great importance.

5. In case men *differ* in judgement, in these *circumstantial* things, such as are in present power, ought take care especial,

1. That they do not *entertain* men into the *communion* of *Saints*, that are onely of *one judgement*: but that *every* one to whom the *keys* of the Kingdome of Heaven are given, may have *free liberty* to go *in* and *out*, and finde *pasture*. It is a most *Antichristian* thing to make *another* key to the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, or *true* Church, besides *that* which *Christ* hath given; for then it will *soon* come to pass, that *Christs* keys will not be *sufficient* without *mans* also; yea *soon* it will come to pass, that *mans* key shall be *sufficient*, without *Christs*; that is, it will not be reckoned *sufficient* for men to be *believers*, and to have received the *gift* of the *Spirit*, to make them of the *Church*, unless they also *conform* to the *judgements* of such and such *men*; but to *be* of their *judgements*, will be *enough* to make them *of* the Church, though they be *destitute* of *faith*, and the *Spirit*. And thus, by making *another* key to *Gods* Kingdom, besides the key that *Christ* hath given, and so to *let in* those that should be *kept out*, and *keep out* those that should be *let in*; this must needs be *avoided* as extreamly *prejudicial* to the *peace* of the Church.

1. That they equally admit men of different judgements in these things, into the communion of Saints.

2. That they equally use and imploy them.

2. They must take care that they do not prefer *Christians* to places of *publike Ministry* and *imployment*, that are onely of *one* judge-

judgement, but that they *dispose* of them *alike*, to *godly* men, of *either* judgement; lest otherwise, many smell the *design* of *Antichrist* underneath; which is, *that none shall buy, or sell, or have any place in the Church*, or Universities, but only *such* as have taken a certain *mark* into their *foreheads* and *right hands*. And though the *outward* mark of the *mystery* may change, yet the *inward minde* and *meaning* of it doth not *change* with the change of *form*.

3. If one *sort* of Christians be not to be *admitted* as *members*, or *preferr'd* as *Officers* in the Church *more* then another, much less is *one party* to be *destroyed* for *another*; for thus would *Satan* also be a *Prince* of *Peace*, who would *destroy* Christs Kingdom to exalt his *own*, that he might possess *all* quietly and alone: but *Christs* way is to *reconcile* those that *differ* in these things, and *of twain, to make them one new man in himself*. And so we shall be like *Christ*, if we seek to bring *both* into *one*, in *love*, and not to destroy *either*, by *force*.

3. That they do not destroy the one, to uphold the other.

These *Rules* are to be observed, as *means* of *peace*, if the things be *circumstantial*.

Now if they be *very truths*, wherein Christians *differ*, yet *such*, wherein they may *erre*, without *danger* of *salvation*, then these *Rules* are of use.

If the faithfull differ in very truths, but such as are not absolutely necessary to salvation, they must observe these rules to preserve peace.

1. To *hear* them speak their *judgements*, with *freedom*, and not to *condemn* them, *unheard*; for thus mayst thou soon condemn the *innocent*, and make thy self *guilty*.

2. To *understand* fully, what thy adversary *means*, before thou *contend* against him; lest if thou want this *wisdom* and *patience*, thou oppose not so much his *judgement*, as thy own *conceit*. Much *better* is it, *calmly* to hear a mans *minde*, from *himself*, then hastily to *guesse* at it; yea, to *conclude* it is so, *before* thou hast heard him *speak*. If thou canst but have *patience* to hear him *relate* his *own* minde, perhaps in the *end*, thou shalt *understand*, it *differs* little from thy *own*, in *substance*.

3. *Reproach* not any thing thy *adversary* speakes, with this, *That thou never heardest it before*: for this may not so much discover

his *error*, as thy *ignorance*; and that which seems to thee a *new error*, if it be *truly* examined by the *word*, may prove an *old truth*. And if thou wilt needs *condemn* whatever savours of *novelty*, how shall the *truths* we yet know not, be *brought in*; or the *errors*, that yet *remain* with us, be *purged out*?

4 Be not *over confident* in what thou holdest, upon thy *own* judgement, or other *mens*, strengthened from *multitude*, *custom* and *antiquity*; for men have *erred* most *grossely*, even in *those* things, wherein they have *thought* themselves most *certain*: And therefore, *Prove all things, that thou mayst hold fast that which is good*. It is much *better* to hold fast the *truth*, upon clear *grounds* from the *word*, then upon the strongest *presumptions* of thy *own* heart.

5. In these *differences* make the *word* the *Judge*, and not *men*. The *Word of God* is the *sole* and *perfect* Judge, in all the *things* of *God*. And therefore *one* said well, *Qui ponit legem judicem, ponit Deum qui autem addit hominem, addit & bestiam*: That is, He that makes the *Law* Judge, makes *God* Judge; but he that makes *man* Judge, makes a *beast* Judge; *For every man is brutish in his knowledge*: And then only are we *sure* of any thing, when we have the *word* of God for it. Neither is it *sufficient* to take the *word* in any *fashion*, for *Judge* in these matters; but we must *necessarily* attain the *knowledge* of it, by the *teaching* of *the Spirit*; seeing we see so many *differences* of judgements among *men*, that make use *alike* of the same *outward* word for their *rule*. Now though *all* have the same *outward* word, yet *all* are not of *one* minde, except they attain to *one Spirit*; for *Paul* saith, 1 *Cor.* 2. that only *the Spirit of God knows the things of God*: Neither doth mans *sense*, or *reason*, understand the *things* of the *Spirit*, but *the spirituall man judgeth all things*. And hence it follows, that we can onely judge *aright* of *divine* truths by the *word*, and we can onely judge *aright* of the *word*, if we have the *Spirit*, to be the *interpreter* of it to us.

6. If thou canst not prevail with him, by the *word*, that he should *agree* with thee, wherein he *differs*; then observe that *moderate* and *Christian* rule of *Paul*, where he saith, *As many as be perfect, be thus minded*; *if any be otherwise minded, God shall also reveal this to him*: And so let us wait with *patience*, till *God* of his *good pleasure* shall *please* to teach *him*, as he hath been *pleased* to teach *us*; because,

Phil. 3. 15, 16.

because, without *this* teaching, he can never know it *aright*, though thou teach him never so *much*.

7. And lastly, When in many *inconsiderable* points of *Religion*, we cannot *agree* with *many* that are *truly* faithfull, nor *they* with *us*; let us, according to *Pauls* rule, leave the *finall judgement* of these things to the *due* time appointed of *God*; as *Paul* hath said, —— *Judge nothing before the time*: And if you ask, *What* time this is? *Christ* hath told us, saying, *If any one hear my word, and believe not, I judge him not; but the Word that I have spoken the same shall judge him at the last day*. For the things of *God* are so *far* beyond the *sense*, *reason*, *knowledge*, *judgement* and *discerning* of *all* the men in the *world*, that many times the *purest* things *are* reckoned *vile*, and the most *spiritual* things, *carnal*; and the very *highest* things of the mystery of *God* and *Christ*, but *conceits* or *errors*; and therefore it is *fit*, that the judgement of *these* things, which are so far beyond *humane comprehension*, should be *deferred* to the *last* day, *Gods judgement* being *better* in his *own* time, then in *ours*.

If the difference be in doctrine absolutely necessary to salvation, what the faithfull must do in this case.

Now in case the *doctrine*, wherein we *differ*, be such as is absolutely *necessary* to salvation, and without *beleeving* which, men can have no *interest* in *Christ*, yet even in *this* case,

1. *Hear* them *speak*, and be rather *confident*, that the *truth* of God will prevail over their *error*, then fearfull, that their *error* will prevail against the *truth*: and so *strive* not, for *secular* power, to *shut* up mens *mouths*, and to *restrain* mens *writings*, though they *speak* and *print* things that seem never so *contrary* to the *truth* of God, and *doctrine* of the *Gospel*. For if men have not *liberty* to divulge their doctrines *publikely*, they will spread them *privately*, to *infect* and *corrupt* many, ere it can be *known* or *prevented*; and if men vent *errors* publikely, if there be as *publick* liberty, to *preach* the *truth*; I doubt not the *success* of the *truth* against it at any time, with *all* that *belong to God*. And it is the only *Gospel way*, to conquer *error* by the *truth*, and all *humane*, yea, and devilish doctrines, by the *Gospel*, which is the *ministration of the Spirit*, and therefore so *mighty*, that all false *teachers* and false *doctrines*, must needs *fall down* before it; seeing, *stronger is that Spirit*, *that is in it*, *then that spirit that is in the world*, which is its *own* spirit, and the *devils*. And if the *Gospel* of Christ, have given already, such *proof* of its *power*, in

former times, when the *whole* world lay in horrible *ignorance*, and error, & *darkneſs covered the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people*; and yet the Goſpel *alone* without any *conjunction* of earthly power, of *States* and *Kingdoms* with it, did *binde* the *devil*, and caſt him out of his *poſſeſſions* and *dominions*, and *overthrow* all *falſe* Religions, men had received from their *fore-fathers*, through *many* generations; and changed the *manners*, *cuſtomes*, *opinions*, *Religions*, and very *natures* of men, and utterly *diſpelled* errrors and hereſies of *all* ſorts; I ſay, ſeeing the *Goſpel*, hath *already* given ſuch large *teſtimony* of its *power*, and made ſo great a *conqueſt* of the *world*, when it was *wholly* under the *power* of the *devil*; I ſee no *reaſon*, that we ſhould now ſo doubt the power of it, as to *ſuffer* no man, to *ſay* any thing, but what *likes* us, or what is indeed *agreeable* to the *word*; as if *error* ſhould have now gotten *more* power, to make *void* the word, then the *word* power to make *void* error. Wherefore, if the *word* be ſuffered, to have *free* paſſage, I dare *reſt* on *that* alone (and ſo dare *all*, that have felt the *power* of it, in their *own* hearts) for the *conquering* and *deſtroying*, all *errors* and *Hereſies* whatſoever in the *true* Church of God. And now it would be *profitable* to hear what ſome other men, who have walked in the ſame *light* and *Spirit*, have ſaid in this *matter*.

Zuinglius (in his book, quoted in the margent) ſpeaks thus, *Hæc unica, eaq; ſola via eſt, qua ad concordiam proxime perveniri poteſt*, &c. "that is, This is the one and only way, whereby we may "moſt ſuddenly attain to concord; if whatſoever things "may be, or are commonly ſaid for any opinion, or againſt it, be "freely propounded in the Churches, ſo that the people be al-"lowed, free judgement in all theſe things. For God, who is "not the God of diſcord, but of peace, nevers ſuffers thoſe who "are gathered together in his ſpirit, to erre or be deceived. And "if this way were obſerved, we ſhould ſhortly ſee the Churches "of Chriſt, enjoying ſweet peace and concord. But now as of-"ten as there are ſome Princes and Cities, that would have the "doctrine of the Goſpel free to all, preſenly there are others that "would ſtop and hinder the courſe of it, and ſo long there muſt "needs ariſe great diſcords and diſſentions. And hence I would "have you judge whether you or we, are departed from the "Church of God, and the doctrine of it. For we ſuffer thoſe "writings

Zuingl. reſpon. ad libel. Strethionis, tom. 2. f. 302.

"writings that proceed as well from you, as from the Papists, to "be openly and freely read, and read again; and the evils which "are taught in them, we slay by the sword of the Spirit, which "is the word of God; but you think, all this business may be "dispatched, with PUBLICK EDICTS AND COM-"MANDS. And therefore do you be judge, whose cause is "most to be suspected; ours, who suffer the doctrine of our ad-"versaries to be published in our Churches, and overthrow them "by the word: or yours, who reproach our doctrine before the "simple people, as heretical; in the mean time by your good "will, neither suffering them to read it nor understand it. Thus far he.

Luther also, in his Epistle to *Frederick* and *John*, *Dukes* of *Saxony*, speaking against that *Spirit*, which he cals *Spiritus Alstetinus*, a *proud, haughty, enthusiastical* spirit, that despised *faith* and *love*, and the *cross*, and the whole *Scriptures*, as low things, not worth *their* minding, and gloried in *strange Revelations*, and *superlative holiness* which *they* had, above *other* believers: And these *enemies* of the Gospel, especially were gathered together in *Alsteta*; and *Luther* writes to the *Dukes*, in whose *Province* this Town was, to this purpose touching them: *Quod vero præsentis interest negotii, nolim ab illustrissimis D. V. prædicandi officium præcludi cuiquam, &c.* That is, But for *what pertains to our present business, I would not, that the office of preaching should be* denyed to *any*, by your most *illustrious Lordships*; but let there be *granted* to them *free Liberty* to preach, and let them *exhibite* the *best* proof of their *learning*. For I said, by the Testimony of *Paul*, *It must needs be, that there must be sects*; and the *word* of *God* must *strive*, and *wage* war in *camps*. And therefore it is evident in *Psa.* 67. that the *Evangelists* are called *Armies*; and that *Christ* in the *Psalms* is called, more then once, the *King of Armies*. Now if *their* spirit be a *right* and *approved* spirit, it will easily *subsist* before us without all *fear*: and so if *our* spirit be *right*, as we hope it is, it will fear neither *them*, nor *any* body *else*. But if they *transgress* the *bounds* of the *Gospel*, and will not contain their *hands*, but will do their work with *violence*, it is the *duty* of your most *Illustrious Lordships*, when they grow *fierce* and *seditious*, to *repress* them, or to *banish* them out of your *Dominions*;

Luther. Farrag. epistol. tom. 7. f. 509.

Luthers rule, how the Magistrate shall deal with the Ministers; to wit if they contain themselves within the bounds of the Gospel, to suffer them; but if they raise seditions and disturbances, to suppress, or banish them.

Dominions; saying, we will *easily* grant to you, to *fight* with the *word*, for the *proving* and *examining* which is *true* Doctrine: but we will restrain the *fiercenesse* of your *spirits*, and contain your *hands*; for these things belong to our *Magistracie*. And therefore they that will not herein *obey*, let them *depart* the *Country*: For (saith he) we who are *Ministers* of the *word* may *preach*, but we must do no *violence*; and *Daniel* hath witnessed, that *Antichrist shall be destroyed without hands*; And *Isaiah* saith, that Christ shall fight in *his* Kingdom with the *spirit of his mouth, and the rod of his lips*, &c.

Albertus Duke of *Borussia.*

Melch. Adam. in vita Osiand.

Also *Albertus, Duke* of *Borussia*, when the great *controversie* fell out, betweene *Andreas Osiander*, and *Morlinus*, and other Ministers, touching the *Righteousnesse* whereby a Christian is made *righteous* before *God*, he would not forbid either *side*, either the *Pulpit* or *Presse*; but left *them* free to *both* alike, and desired them to forbear reproaches one against another, and to debate the businesse *quietly* by the *word* of God.

The Bohemians. *Fox. Martyrolog. vol. 1. p. 858.*

Likewise the *Bohemians*, in a certain exhortation of theirs, to *Kings* and *Princes*, to stir them up to the *zeal* of the *Gospel*, subscribed by *Procopius* and *Conradus*, and other *Captains* of the *Bohemians*, have these words; *They* say (that is the Papists) it ought not to be *suffered*, that we should be *heard*, in confessing our *faith*. Now, how may that be *proved* by the *holy* Scripture, since *Christ* heard the *devil*, as is written, *Mat.* 4? And *they* are not better then *Christ*. nor *we* worse then the *devil*. If they be *righteous*, and have the *truth* with them, as they *say* they have, and we be *unrighteous*, why do they fear? since the *truth* ought not to be afraid of *falshood*; and *Zorobabel* declared, That *truth is of all things the most mighty, and overcometh all things*. For *Christ* is the *truth*, John 14. *I am the way, the truth*; and the *devil* is the *father* of *lyes*, John 8. Therefore if the *Pope* and his *Priests* have the *truth*, let them overcome us with the *word* of God: but if they have *lyes*, then they cannot *long* abide, in all their *presumption*. Wherefore, we *exhort* and *beseech*, all the Imperial *Cities*, all *Kings, Princes, Noble-men, rich, poor*, for Gods sake, and for his *Righteousnesse*, that *one* of them, write hereof to another, and that there may be some *means* made, how

1 Esdr. 3.

we

we may *commune* with you *safely*, and *friendly*, at some such place, as shall be fit, both for *you* and *us*: and bring with you your *Bishops* and *Teachers*, and let them and our Teachers fight together with the word of *God*, and let us *hear* them; and let not one *overcome* the other by *violence* or *false subtilty*, but only by the word of *God* &c.

By all which it appears, That let mens *Doctrine* be what it *will*, they ought to be *heard*, and *convinced* by the *word*, and not presently to be *silenced*, and subdued by *force*.

Now secondly, if upon *hearing* and *debating* things by the *word*, it shall clearly appear, that our adversaries hold *such* things, which are so *false* and erroneous, that they cannot be reckoned *believers* and *members* of Christ, that hold them; nor can retain those *Doctrines*, without *unavoidable damnation*: then in this case, the *true* Church, hath Authority from the *Word*, to do these things.

2. If the doctrine after hearing of it be found damnable, the community, is

1. *To condemn the doctrine.*
2. *To excommunicate their persons.*

1. The Church ought to *condemn* the doctrine, as contrary to the *Gospel*, and to that *eternal* and *unchangeable*, and most clear and certain *truth*, which Christ hath heard from the *Father*, and delivered to his *Church*; which is the *faith once given to the Saints*, and never to be altered. And so to tell the people, what *Doctrine* it is; even such, as carries in it an utter *enmity* to *Christ* and his *Spirit*; and so consequently *death* and *damnation*; and that therefore they are to *take heed* of it, as they *love* eternall *life*, and would *avoid* eternall *death*.

1 To condemn the doctrine.

And thus *Christ* condemned the Doctrine of the *Scribes*, and of the *Pharisees*, and of the *Sadducees*, and bid his Disciples, *Beware of them*; and *Paul*, the Doctrine of *Hymenaus* and *Philetus*, which did *eat as a canker*, &c.

2. The *Church* in this case, may also *excommunicate* the *Person*; yea, though he should be *silent* and not *seduce* others; seeing *believers*

2. To excommunicate the person.

Devers can have no true *communion* with such an one, who is in *a way* to the *need* of *life*, in which all the true communion of the faithfull stands. Wherefore such persons may *justly* be cut off from the *Society* of the faithfull. But *herein* also, these *Rules* are to be observed; to wit,

Rules to be observed in excommunication.

1. That this *censure* be not proceeded to, for *every* varying from the truth (as is already said) but for *denying* such *truths*, or *holding* such *errors*, as make a man *incapable* of salvation.

2. That *this* be not done, till all *other* wayes have been tryed, to *reclaim* him.

3. That this be *done*, not by *two* or *three* persons, but by the *whole* Church, or *communion*.

4. That it be done, not by their *own*, but by *Christs* Authority, who is alwayes *present* in his Church, as the *Head* of that body; and that it be done, not by any humane *Passion* or *violence*, but by the *efficacy* of the *holy Spirit*, who is alwayes *present* among believers, as the *Spirit* of those *members*.

Excommunication, the Churches last punishment.

And this *Excommunication* thus regulated, is the *last* punishment the *Church* can inflict, by the warrant and authority of *Christ*: and it cannot *imprison* any, or *banish* them, or *fine* them, or put them to death: for we must not expound that place of *Paul*, *Hæreticum hominem devita*, as *Hugo Charensis* did, to take a *Heretike* out of his *life*; but him that is a *Heretike*, we must *avoid*, we must not *kill*; the *former* being *Christs* rule; the latter, *Antichrists*.

Conclusion.

Now these things have I spoken and propounded to the *faithfull* and *Churches* of Christ, wherever the *providence* of God shall cast this *Book*, which may travel *farther* on this *errand*, then *weak flesh* can do: and I *so* propound them *all*, as being most ready, *my self*, to hear from *any* what they can propound in more *light* and

FINIS.

FINIS.